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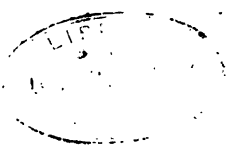
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Hugues de Lionne
Foreign Secretary to King Louis XIV
by de Larroissin

A
FRENCH AMBASSADOR
AT THE
COURT OF CHARLES THE SECOND

Le Comte de Cominges
From his unpublished Correspondence

BY
J. J. JUSSERAND
Conseiller d'Ambassade

WITH PORTRAITS

POPULAR EDITION



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A part of this work was published in the "Nineteenth Century," and is here reprinted, by the kind permission of Mr. James Knowles.

A French Ambassador at the Court of Charles the Second.

INTRODUCTION.

WHEN Mr. Pepys went home, he secretly confided to his note-book his impressions of what he had seen in the day. Not less secretly did foreign Ambassadors in England write to their kings from day to day of English manners, court festivities, the British Parliament and navy, city banquets, matters of etiquette, and also, at great length, of treaty negotiations.

Both secrets now lie open : Mr. Pepys's manuscripts have long been deciphered, and the dragons who kept the gates of the silent temples of diplomacy have been motioned away. Great use has been made by historians of the stores of information thus thrown open ; the venerable volumes, bound in red morocco, of the "*Correspondance d'Angleterre*," at the French Foreign Office, with the royal cypher and crown, and the adder of the Colbert family on the back and sides, have been handled by Mignet, by Macaulay, and several others. Writers have taken from the wealthy depository the scraps and quotations they wanted to further their

particular object, were it the succession of Spain or the English Revolution.

Another experiment is still to be tried, and the mass of this correspondence may be put to a different use. It remains to take it, so to say, as it is ; not to take one side only, not to single out what refers to Spain, to England, or to one or another question ; but to accept it altogether as it stands, and see what ambassadors at the time of Mr. Pepys and the Sun-king wrote about. What did they consider worth mentioning ? In what way were they struck by the manners and the genius of the country ? What did they consider specially noticeable ? Matters which are no longer alluded to in diplomatic correspondence filled then sheet after sheet of official paper. What were these matters, and why did they fill so much space ?

Most of the Ambassadors sent then to London had travelled and made war in Europe, but mostly in the South ; when they came as Ambassadors to England, England was for them a *terra incognita*. They came and made discoveries. Looking at a town from a distance the houses appear a confused mass, above which, much more clearly than on a nearer inspection, emerge towers, steeples, and spires. The foreignness of Ambassadors to their new surroundings acted as distance does ; they did not plunge into ordinary life, they had only general, and sometimes confused notions about it ; but they observed a good many things that rose above it, sign-posts which they tried to read and understand. It is interesting to know whether, among the variety of such signs rising above the common level, they were more struck by the Tower of London or the old houses

where Parliament sat, by Whitehall or by St. Paul's, by the masts innumerable in the Chatham dockyards or by the chapels innumerable, where a variety of creeds were more or less openly taught. While considering from this standpoint the ambassadorial correspondence of those times, we may form an estimate of what foreigners of education and with the best means for information, wondered at when coming to London ; and at the same time we get an insight into the tastes, the wants and the curiosities of his Sun-like Majesty King Louis Quatorze.

With this object in view I chose the correspondence concerning the years 1661 to 1666, mainly filled by the Embassy to England of the Comte de Cominges.¹ His correspondence may be taken as a good average sample of the documents preserved at the French Foreign Office, and though the value of the dispatches of Cominges was well known, only a few extracts have been published.² Macaulay made scarcely any use of it ; and as for Cominges himself, though he was a man "important toute sa vie," according to St. Simon, it cannot be said that he is too well known : the forty-five volumes of Michaut, the forty-six of the "*Nouvelle Biographie Générale*," have not a line, not a word about him.

What he wrote concerning England, what his master Louis XIV. wanted him to write, is hereafter explained.

¹ I used especially vols. lxxv. to lxxxviii. of the "*Correspondance d'Angleterre*," preserved at the Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Paris.

² Especially by Lord Braybrooke, at the end of his edition of Pepys (twenty-eight extracts, not from the originals, but from copies preserved at the National Library) ; by the Comte de Baillon, in his "*Henriette d'Angleterre*," Paris, 1886 ; by Ravaisson, in his "*Archives de la Bastille*," &c.

But first some few apologies for the hero of this work will, perhaps, not be amiss. Bereft as he is now of his diplomatic privilege, and exposed to censure, it is only fair that his judges be reminded that the benefit of extenuating circumstances may be equitably extended to some of his worse faults.

First it must be confessed that he did not know a word of English ; but scarcely anybody did in his time ; the savants of the "*Journal des Sçavans*" were not more learned in this respect, as we shall see, than the very Ambassadors.

He had never heard of Shakespeare, and only knew "*Miltonius*," which may come from the same cause ; he did not know English-writing Shakespeare, but he knew "*Miltonius*," because this was a Latin author. For *he* knew Latin very well, as most educated people did in his time, so much so that he and his colleagues of 1665 offered, as will appear further, to conduct in Latin the conferences for the treaty with England.

Beyond the classics, it must be admitted, he knew nothing ; and to many, therefore, he may have appeared ignorant and proud. "*Rough and proud*," he is called in the "*Mémoires de Guiche*."¹ But it must be remembered that he was a soldier by profession, and a good one too : this may account for some of his roughness and pride. For the same reason, as will be seen, when he bowed, he bowed very low, and according to rule ; when he stood, he stood very stiff : men of this

¹ Cominges had "*des manières qui lui sont propres et qu'on peut dire être assez rudes et assez fières*" ("*Mémoires du Comte de Guiche*," London, 1743, 12°, year 1665, p. 63).

sort—a somewhat rare sort now—were then numerous ; they wore ribbons on their cuirasses.

It will be found, lastly, that several of his judgments are rather bitter. On this important point some excuse is to be found in the fact that the country was at that time unsettled ; that maladministration was breeding discontent, and that, if the English people themselves chose means different from those Cominges would have recommended, they, at least, agreed with him on the inconveniencies of the Stuart *régime*, and they put an end to it.

If, lastly, any touch of ill-humour appears here and there, let it be remembered that Ambassadors had good reason now and again to be ill-humoured. Not to speak of the fogs, which seem to have greatly irritated Cominges, he could not ignore that he was very unpopular ; contrary to custom, he was not bowed to in the streets, and he keenly felt the want of bows ; he was twice besieged in his house by the mob, and had his windows broken ; his predecessor, d'Estrades, had been shot at, and had received a bullet in his hat. Such were some of the unpleasant items of ambassadorial life in those days.

But this one redeeming point he had : though usually speaking first and foremost of King Charles to King Louis, and of courtly affairs and intrigues, Cominges felt that besides the king there was a nation, with qualities of its own, fickle (he thought) in religious matters, stubborn in matters of foreign policy, endowed with an indomitable courage, and with an irrepressible fondness for liberty : at which last thought, it is true, he crossed himself. If he sometimes misinterpreted

their meaning and misunderstood their manners, he never misjudged their strength, he admired their navy, nay, and even their Parliament, which he does not hesitate to call "auguste." Out of temper as he was with the fogs, and unpopular for being a subject of the Sun-king, he was wise enough to disprove the insulting rumours current in both countries on the character of the other.

But it is time to let him speak for himself, and be judged, as the French law permits, on his own testimony.

CHAPTER I.

HOW COMINGES'S PREDECESSOR HAD TO LEAVE ENGLAND.

AT the time when our story begins, if story it may be called, Cardinal Mazarin had just died (March 9, 1661); Louis XIV., aged twenty-two, had assumed the reins of government; Hugues de Lionne was, not yet officially, but in practice, Foreign Secretary to the King; the Stuart dynasty had recently been re-established in England. The French and English kings were beginning their reigns at about the same time; both were young and intelligent, and enjoyed a wide popularity among their subjects; both had a brilliant court of able men, fine courtiers and beautiful ladies, and both delighted in worldly pleasures. But while the one, from his very youth meant to be a king, the other never cared to be one. Louis was, even at this time, writing of his privileges and his flag in the very tone of deep-set resolution which Charles used when the question was of the rank and privileges of the Lady Castlemaine. "Whosoever I find endeavouring," wrote Charles to Clarendon, "to hinder this resolution of mine [to appoint the Castlemaine a lady of the Queen's bedchamber] . . . I will be his enemy to the last

moment of my life. You know how much a friend I have been to you. . If you will oblige me eternally, make this business as easy to me as you can, of what opinion you are of, for I am resolved to go through with this matter let what will come on it, and whomsoever I find to be my Lady Castlemaine's enemy in this matter, I do promise upon my word to be his enemy as long as I live." ¹

In the same strain, but with a different object, Louis was writing to his ambassador in England : " The point I most especially noticed in your dispatch is how neither the King my brother, nor his advisers, do know me well as yet ; else they would not assume a firmness and hauteur in their attitude bordering upon threats. There is no power under heaven that can make me move one step on such a path. Evil may come to me, but no feeling of fear ever will ; . . . the King of England and his Chancellor can of course make an estimate of what my forces are ; but they do not see my heart. And I, who feel and know both, wish that you let them hear, for my only answer, as soon as this courier reaches you, that I do not crave, nor look for, any accommodation in the affair of the salute at sea, because I will well find means to maintain my right, whatever be the consequence. . . . All the Chancellor has put forward is nothing for me as compared to a

¹ T. H. Lister, "Life and Administration of Edward, Earl of Clarendon." London, 1838, 3 vols. 8vo., vol. iii. p. 202. Clarendon writes to the Duke of Ormond : "The worst is the King is as discomposed as ever, and looks as little after his business ; which breaks my heart, and makes me and other of your friends weary of our lives" (Sept. 9, 1662. Ibid. p. 222).

point d'honneur, connected, were it ever so slightly, with the fame of my crown. Far from taking into account, in such a case as this, what may become of the States of others, such as Portugal, I will be found ready to put mine own in jeopardy, rather than tarnish by any faint-heartedness the glory which I am seeking in all things as the principal aim of all my actions." ¹

All their life long, and though Louis was not without his La Vallière and his Montespan, and though Charles was not without his William Temple and his Triple Alliance, they remained to the end such as they appear at their *début*, in these two letters, both ready to put their crowns in jeopardy, the one for a *point d'honneur*, the other for a Castlemaine.

Louis's Foreign Secretary, Hugues de Lionne, was not unworthy of his master, as may be gathered from the excellent sketch from life left to us by the Abbé de Choisy. "He had a genius of a superior order. His mind, quick and keen from his birth, had been yet sharpened in the affairs which Mazarin had early entrusted to him. . . . A wit and a scholar, he did not write very well, but with great ease, and would never take the trouble to do better. The very reverse of avaricious, and considering riches only as a means for satisfying his taste for pleasure, he was a gamester and spendthrift, and never stopped even when his health was at stake. In ordinary circumstances he would remain idle, except when he had pleasure for his object.

¹ To d'Estrades, Jan. 25, 1662. "Œuv. de Louis XIV.," 1806, v. 68. The original draft in the handwriting of Lionne is preserved in vol. lxxxi. of the "Correspondance d'Angleterre," French Foreign Office.

When pressed by necessity he was found indefatigable, and spent his days and nights at work ; this, however, happened rarely. He expected no help from his clerks, but drew all from himself, wrote with his own hand or dictated all the dispatches ; giving, however, each day only a few hours to the affairs of State, with the thought that, thanks to his quickness, he could regain the time his passions made him squander.”¹ The numerous volumes in the French archives filled with drafts of dispatches and minutes of conversations, written in his own excessively rapid and not very legible hand, testify to the present day to the truth of Choisy’s portrait.

Such was the King and such his minister. The first ambassador they sent to England after the Restoration, Godefroy Comte d’Estrades had his stay there curtailed by an unexpected event. He was “a tall, cold person, with a fine figure. Few men,” wrote Tallemant des Réaux in his “*Historiettes*,” “are better endowed with cold-blooded valour ; he has fought several fine duels. One day, it is reported, he fought against a certain bravado who placed himself on the brink of a little ditch saying to d’Estrades, ‘I won’t pass the ditch.’ ‘And I,’ answered d’Estrades, marking a line behind him with his sword, ‘I will not pass this line.’ They fight ; d’Estrades kills the other.” He had been a page to King Louis XIII., and made war in Holland and Italy. His taste for fighting, worthy of Mérimée’s “*Chronique de Charles IX.*,” had not prevented him from entering the diplomatic service. He was entrusted with missions to England, to Piedmont, to the Dutch States,

¹ “*Mémoires*” edited by de Lescure. Paris, 1888, 2 vols., vol. i. p. 89.





LE COMTE D'ESTRADES

Ambassador to England 1661

From the engraving by Etienne Picart

and he took part in the conferences at Munster, 1646. His mother was a Secondat of the family which was to boast in after-times of the famous Montesquieu.

D'Estrades had reached England in July, 1661, and had established himself at Chelsea. The instructions with which he had been supplied prescribed to him to prepare a treaty with England, and contained strict intimations as to the care he ought to bestow on all questions of etiquette and precedence. His Majesty recommends his representative "jealously to preserve the dignity of his Crown in the Court whither he is going ; because any insult he may receive would in reality fall on his master, who is bound to resent it to the utmost. . . . The Sieur d'Estrades will in all occasions preserve the pre-eminence to which the King is entitled, allowing no ambassador to go before him, except the Emperor's in case he were to send one to England. He will allow to his left the Spanish ambassador as well as the representatives of the other kings who hold their crown direct from God alone. As for those of Venice . . . he will allow them only to go behind."¹

No treaty at all was to be signed during d'Estrades' stay, and all his ingenuity, valour, knowledge of the world, of military tactics and diplomacy, were meant to be used only, and not without some deep and lasting consequence, in those same questions of precedence and etiquette.

The main preoccupation of the French sovereign then was Spain, a dreaded rival in the past, a possible prey in the future. The Most Christian King was bent

¹ May 13, 1661.

upon asserting publicly, as he did privately in his instructions, his right of precedence over his Catholic brother. The fiction according to which an ambassador's person is, so to say, a duplicate of the king's person was better attended to and believed in than it is now-a-days, and it was of great importance to Louis that Baron de Watteville,¹ the London duplicate of the King of Spain, should not be allowed to go before his own representative. Watteville lived brilliantly in York House, not far from Whitehall, spent much money, and was very popular in London. It was obvious from the first that, both being resolved, and supplied with means to maintain their pretensions, a fight would ensue. As in d'Estrades's duel, each had drawn an impassable line behind his own heel.

In the month following the arrival of the French Envoy, the fray was on the point of taking place, but Charles intervened. It was then the custom for ambassadors when they came to England, first to establish themselves privately in their lodgings, and, after they had spent some time and much money in gilding their carriages and embroidering their servants, to go back to Greenwich, to row up the Thames opposite the Tower, and there to perform the ceremony of a landing in state and an *entrée* into the town.

Venetian Ambassadors had just reached London, and were to make their *entrée*. But as large preparations had been made by d'Estrades and Watteville to maintain their point to the bitter end, Charles had interposed and persuaded the two not to send their carriages at all

¹ From Wattenveil in Thurgovia; his name is often spelt Bateville; he died in 1670.

to the *entrée*, and remain quietly at home. Hearing of this pacific arrangement, young Louis angrily reminded his Ambassador that such matters were no joke, and that *he* was in earnest indeed :

“I confess that after what you had written in your former dispatches concerning the *entrée* of the Venetian Ambassadors extraordinary in London, and the preparations you were making to maintain in this occasion the prerogatives due to my crown above all the others, it could never have occurred to me that the event would turn out and end as it has. I will not conceal that I have been deeply impressed by two things : the one that the King my brother has taken part in this without necessity and in a rather unobliging manner, as he seems to have been bent upon having a complete equality established between me and my brother the Catholic King. He cannot ignore however the many reasons for which the pre-eminence belongs to me, and how I have been in possession of it in all times and places. The other is that you have consented to what he has let you know he wanted.” The English king is free to give what orders he pleases to his subjects, but not to a foreign ambassador ; and if he had persisted, d’Estrades ought to have at once retired from his Court.¹

With such instructions, our Ambassador, who was at the same time a “Lieutenant général des armées du Roi,” could not fail to take the matter seriously, and he wrote to Lionne : “I prepare to carry the thing the next time to such a pitch that I am greatly mistaken if the most difficult to please find anything to reproach

¹ The King to d’Estrades. August 22, 1661.

me with.”¹ Louis, on his part, remained on the watch, and there are many letters in the volumes at the French Foreign Office in which he, from day to day, fired the zeal of his envoy. One day he informed d’Estrades of taunts attributed to Watteville, and which had come to his knowledge ; another day he had heard of the sending to England of Count Strozzi as an Ambassador from the Emperor, and wrote : “ Whether the said Count Strozzi has notified his *entrée* to you, or whether, to please Watteville, he has not, I mean you to send your coaches to meet him, and so to arrange as to make sure they keep the rank due to me, and go before the carriages of all the other Ambassadors. . . . I will not speak of the measures you have to take beforehand, to be secure that your people will be able to keep their rank during the march, well believing that you will omit nothing in it.”²

Strozzi’s *entrée* does not take place, but a little later news comes of the arrival of a Swedish Ambassador. The King on the 7th of October is careful to put his Ambassador on his guard, for he has received some secret information : “ The information purports that General Monk has promised the Baron de Watteville to give him soldiers of his Scotch regiment with a few Irish to strengthen the Spaniards and guard their coach ; and, depending upon this help, the said Watteville has resolved to be represented at the *entrée*. I know it for sure ; my information comes from the house of Monk himself, and has been reported by one of his most intimate confidants. The coach will go to Tower Hill unattended, but the escort will be found

¹ To Lionne. August 22, 1661.

² September 28, 1661.

ready there or in some of the streets where you are to pass. I deem, therefore, that when once your coach has taken the place due to it immediately after the Swedish Ambassador's, your men must not leave it before it has reached the house of the said Ambassador, for fear that at the crossing of some street these Scotch and Irish rush in with might and main and stop you and let Watteville go."

But d'Estrades was already wound up to the proper degree, for before the King's letter could have reached him, he was on his side writing to Brienne the younger : "I am making the largest preparations possible ; the Spanish Ambassador does his best to oppose me. The event will take place on Monday." ¹ Louis, on his side, has nothing to add to what he has already intimated, and no letter of his can possibly reach his representative in time ; still he writes again, because he is so impatient to hear of the issue, and just to say that he is so : "I have great impatience to know how the ceremony will have gone, the more so as I can scarcely doubt it will have been to your advantage and to my satisfaction. For you have the word of the King my brother, who has promised to second your intentions ; and, besides, being so near the French coast, and having at hand the garrison of Gravelines, you will have been able to place yourself in such a state as to prevent the Spaniards feeling any inclination to compete with you." D'Estrades was military governor of Gravelines ; the idea suggested by the King had already occurred to him, and he had caused a troop of his own soldiers to be conveyed to London

¹ October 6, 1661.

with their arms and equipage—a thing scarcely conceivable now—in order to take part in the expected “ceremony.”

The morning of the 10th of October came. On that day Mr. Pepys rose very early. He had much to do, business to transact and things various to observe. The *entrée* and the “fight for the precedence” were to take place on that day. Nothing could better enliven the dull streets of the town than such a fray, and therefore Mr. Pepys was all the day long on tip-toe.

As soon as morning light came, there was a great noise of “soldiers and people running up and down the street ;” and Mr. Pepys hastened to and fro and bustled about as best he could. He peered at “the Spanish Ambassador’s and at the French, and there saw great preparations on both sides ; but the French made the most noise and ranted most, but the other made no stir almost at all ; so that I was afraid the other would have too great a conquest over them.” Bent upon making a day of it (as indeed it was in the history of the French and Spanish kingdoms) he ran to Cheapside, as soon as he had had his meal, there to hear that “the Spanish hath got the best of it, and kill three of the French coach-horses and several men, and is gone through the city next to our King’s coach : at which it is strange to see how all the city did rejoice.” Not so strange, however, for “we do naturally all love the Spanish, and hate the French.”

“As I am in all things curious,” Mr. Pepys continues, writing at a time of the day when it was not so well known as it is now that he was, indeed, curious in

all things, "I ran after them, through all the dirt and the streets full of people, till at last, at the Mewes, I saw the Spanish coach go, with fifty drawn swords at least to guard it, and our soldiers shouting for joy. And so I followed the coach, and then met it at York House, where the Ambassador lies; and there it went in with great state." After which this *mouche du coche* ran to "the French house," to enjoy the discomfiture of the hated ones; and a treat it was to see them, "for they all look like dead men, and not a word among them but shake their heads." To make things complete, Mr. Pepys gathers and notes with delight that "the French were at least four to one in number, and had neare 100 case of pistols among them, and the Spaniards had not one gun among them; which is for their honour for ever and the others' disgrace." He could now go home, "having been very much daubed with dirt," and triumph upon his wife, silly thing, who sided with the French—a result, probably, of her being so well read in La Caprenède and Scudéry.

The result was received with great applause throughout the capital, and pamphlets were circulated giving a humorous account of the defeat suffered by the French. "Many thousands of spectators came to behold this strange and desperate conflict," we read in one of those sheets, "it being variously rumoured several ways, but more especially a single duel betwixt these two persons of honour, the Ambassadors extraordinary from the illustrious and Christian princes, Spain and France." The Spaniards displayed the utmost valour: "Indeed it was the fortune of the mounsiers to receive the greatest loss, five being translated out of

this world into another, and above thirty wounded, with the loss of one Spaniard and very few wounded. For indeed through their abundant fortitude and magnanitude, they became triumphant that day, it being worthy of observation that an ancient man of the Spanish party disputed several passes with six Frenchmen.”¹

But as “il n'est si beau jour qui ne meine sa nuit,” what was to be Spain's honour for ever did not keep long its lustre. While this rejoicing was taking place, d'Estrades was mournfully writing to Lionne: “As it was not a thing I could do, to go myself, I had sent my son; and of the fifty men who were there with him five were killed and thirty-three wounded. They have had to deal with more than two hundred, and there and wherever they have been attacked they have done their duty.” The Ambassador goes on recounting the various proofs he has had already of the small degree of popularity he enjoys with the London rabble: “In the course of eight days I was twice in danger of being assassinated and a musket ball went through my hat; soldiers and a mob have come to attack me in my own house.”² Of bullets d'Estrades had a right to speak, having in former times received some, not in his hat only, but in his body also.

¹ “A true relation of the manner of the dangerous dispute and bloody conflict betwixt the Spaniards and the French at Tower Wharfe and Tower Hill on Monday, September the 30th, 1661 [O. S.] . . . with the number killed and wounded on both sides . . . published for general satisfaction” (a copy at the French Foreign Office, “Angleterre,” vol. lxxvi.).

² October 13, 1661.





KING LOUIS XIV

From the engraving by Nanteuil

"Ad vivum, 1664"

Great was the anger of the sovereign who prided himself upon "being the first King among Christians and to be known as such in the courts of all the other kings, even in the remotest countries."¹ He felt as if he had read Mr. Pepys's own diary, and did not rest till he had washed away the memory of this "disgrace." "I am in such a hurry," he wrote, "to let this gentleman start . . . that I will not, by far, tell you all I want, concerning what has happened to you. Well may you believe that I have deeply resented those insults as their nature binds me to, and my honour being at stake. I hope with the help of God, and through the vigour of the resolutions I am taking, the which I shall carry as far as people will make it necessary, that those who have caused me this displeasure will soon be more sorry for it and anxious than I ever was."²

No vain threats. The elegant young prince, with a flood of wavy hair round his beautiful face, scarcely out of the keeping of his mother and of the late Mazarin, was true to his word, and it was soon obvious that Watteville had mistaken his own master and his time. While Charles II. was asking another great diarist of his day, John Evelyn, to draw up a "narrative in vindication of his Majesty, and of the carriage of his officers and standers-by,"³ King Louis the Fourteenth, who had at once expelled the Spanish Ambassador from his Court, got from his father-in-law all the satisfaction he wanted. Watteville was recalled ;

¹ Instructions to d'Estrades, May 13, 1661.

² October 16, 1661.

³ "Evelyn's Diary," under the date Oct. 1. 1661 (O.S.).

it was settled that henceforth Spanish Ambassadors would cease to compete for precedence with the most Christian King's envoys ; and a medal was struck, one of the finest in the royal collection, to commemorate the event.¹

Louis gave his full approbation to d'Estrades, who, this time had not hesitated to leave the English Court ; but he could not doubt that the continuation of the same Ambassador's services in England, would not be conducive to the close union with that kingdom which was a part of his policy. He therefore, after having sent him back for a short while to London, decided to appoint him his ambassador to the States of Holland.

D'Estrades was staying in Paris when he received the visit of Richard Bellings sent to him by the English Chancellor on a special mission. "I am sorry," he wrote to Lionne, on the 17th of July, 1662, "not to be able to go to St. Germain's to speak of an affair which will not displease his Majesty, nay, and is very advantageous to him. The Chancellor of England has sent me a person in his confidence, with a letter accrediting him. Were you to come to Paris I would tell you what are the proposals." The proposals were of the sale of Dunkirk ; the negotiation was knotty and arduous. After a long bargaining on both sides, in which Colbert had to say his word, and several sham break-offs, the matter was arranged for five millions of livres. D'Estrades, after one last stay in England, had the honour to take possession of the town in the name of his master. The first two millions

¹ The die of which still exists at the Hôtel des Monnaies, Paris.

were at once embarked on five boats, and taken to the Tower, where they were honoured with a personal visit from the King : "The money told at Calais for the sale of Dunkirk has arrived, and has been located at the Tower, where the King of England would go and see it, when he was having his ride this morning towards 'Ouleiks.'" By which word, Secretary of Embassy Batailler, means Woolwich.¹

D'Estrades, having thus redeemed his character as a servant of the State, could now go to Holland, where, however, the inimical fates were already preparing for him another difficulty on the score of punctilio. This time he stood his ground against the Prince of Orange, and managed so as not to be worsted. He risked nothing less than his life in it, but succeeded. "Tuesday last," Sir George Downing, the English envoy, reports to Clarendon, "there was another *rencontre* in the Foreholt between the Prince of Orange and Monsieur d'Estrades, the French Ambassador their coaches, between four and five in the afternoon. . . . No sword drawn on either side, nor a blow given ; but the people began to flock in infinite numbers, . . . and it was most evident that, had but one stroke been given, d'Estrades and his coach and horses had been buried upon the place and his house plundered and pulled down to the ground." D'Estrades "alleged, which is true, that once before the Prince had yielded to him ; but Monsieur Zulestein says, that at that time the Prince had not his own coachman, but another who was not experienced in those things, and that it was

¹ To Louis, Dec. 4, 1662. A medal was struck, with the motto : "Dunquerca recuperata providentia principis," M.CLXII.

done unawares." "But, you see," Downing wisely concludes, "how dangerous it is to make slips, he having once unawares quitted the rail, the French Ambassador stood upon it, that he ought to do it the second time."¹ Thus did d'Estrades clear himself of the aspersions of Mr. Pepys.

¹ The Hague, April 29, 1664, O.S. Lister's "Life of Clarendon." London, 1838, 3 vols. 8vo., vol. ii. p. 314. Concerning the parts of d'Estrades's correspondence which were published in the last century, and the spurious documents mixed with it, see Iaroslav Goll's two articles in the "Revue Historique," 1877.

CHAPTER II.

COMINGES.

D'ESTRADES being gone, Louis and his adviser, Lionne, chose, to replace him at the British Court, the Comte de Cominges, a well-known diplomatist and soldier, who was, according to St. Simon, "important toute sa vie." He was now in the fiftieth year of his age, and had done and seen much.

Gaston Jean Baptiste de Cominges (or Comenge), Seigneur of St. Fort, Fléac, and La Réole, born in 1613, was the son of Charles de Cominges, who died at the siege of Pignerol.¹ His family prided itself upon an immeasurable antiquity, the first of their ancestors known by name being, according to Moreri, Anevius, who is said to have flourished about the year 900. St. Simon, who was not a man to adopt easily such views, quietly says that "people do not know what they

¹ Cominges's arms form one of the plates of the "Armorial du St. Esprit" (Chalcographie du Louvre); his monogram has been reproduced by Bouvenne, "Les monogrammes historiques," Paris, 1870, p. 35.

were before the year 1440." Certain it is that at the time we are speaking of they were solidly established in the world with an uncle, the kindly irascible old Guitaut, as Captain of the Bodyguards of Anne of Austria, the Queen-mother, and with the splendid château of Epoisses, not far from Semur, as the chief place and, so to say, the capital of the family. A part of the castle was since then raised to the ground during the Great Revolution, but the largest part, with a tower dating back from the tenth century, from the time, in fact, of the misty Anevius, is still to be seen, and still belongs to the family. Very fine it looks with its tall mossy roofs, its thick walls, its sculptured balconies and terraces, and the roses and chrysanthemums that bloom on the declivity of the old dried-up moat. Many remembrances are kept there of former illustrious guests ; there is Condé's room and Madame de Sévigné's chamber ; and in the precious well-kept archives, a large bundle of the Marchioness's letters with the seal and silk string still attached to them, written in the large handwriting and with the *free thought* orthography of the matchless lady. Anevius's portrait is not there ; but there are countless Cominges and Guitauts, periwigged warriors in cuirasses, knights of the Holy Ghost, abbots and abbesses, ladies with powdered hair, marshals of France, and presidents of Parliament. In the "chambre du roi" old Guitaut stares at a pretty proud young person who may or may not be the Montespan ; and on the painted walls of the corridor Roman heroes and Arcadian shepherds enjoy their glory and their loves according to the fashion of the time. Cannon balls from a siege recall warlike

times; the old chapel remains untouched, but has become the village church, and the little houses built for canons have been allotted to retired gardeners and other old servants of the family.

A descendant of warriors, Cominges went early to the wars, took part in the sieges of St. Omer, Hesdin, Arras, and Aire, and was made, in 1644, under his uncle Guitaut, a lieutenant of the Bodyguards of the Queen-mother. From this date he always enjoyed the confidence of Anne of Austria, who entrusted to his uncle and to him several missions not a little difficult to perform, in which, however, they proved successful. To him it was she applied to have the notorious and popular Broussel, "the idol of the people," removed from Paris in the midst of the Fronde agitation. He stopped the old man "without allowing him to eat his dinner or even to resume his shoes which he had just taken off, but placed him in a coach and carried him away. A strange thing happened. As they were nearing the palace, the coach broke and Cominges asked ladies who were passing by to lend him theirs, offering his excuses, and assuring them that nothing else than such a case would have induced him to show so much incivility. So he took the quay and reached the St. Honoré Gate."¹ To the last we shall find Cominges such as he appeared on this occasion; he will never allow any Broussel time to put on his shoes, but while keeping his Broussels in hand, he will always find time to fulfil the duties of etiquette. To both the uncle and nephew was assigned the no less delicate

¹ "Mémoires de Nicolas Goulas," ed. C. Constant, Paris, 1879, 3 vol. 8vo., vol. ii. p. 349.

task to remove from the very Louvre to the Donjon de Vincennes, the Princes Condé and Conti, and the Duke de Longueville (1650).¹ They severally "walked to each of the Princes, and after having paid to them their very respectful compliments, they stopped them in the name of the King."²

In the intervals of his military duties and of his various missions Cominges found time to study; he enjoyed a reputation at Court for being a man of thought and knowledge as well as a good swordsman and a good guitarist. We find him fighting a duel in 1639: "And as this month was notable for the number of nuptials that then happened, so was it also," writes Bassompierre, "by the number of the duels, such as those by d'Armentières, de Savignac, de Bouquant, de Roquelaure, de Chatelus, de Cominges, and others."³ Cominges's duel was as serious as d'Estrades's, for he, too, killed his man. The famous Chapelain, the author of "*La Pucelle*," informed as follows the Marchioness de Flamarens of what had happened: "M. de Richefons has fought for the second time against M. de Cominges, and this time has received two mortal wounds. He has, however, had four days' time to prepare himself to his death and beg pardon to God for his sins. The quarrel was an irreconcilable one, that could only be ended by the death of one of the two. I think you will do well to express

¹ Cominges wrote an account of it, and it has been published with biographical notes by Tamizey de Larroque, "*Revue des questions historiques*," October 1, 1871.

² Choisy's "*Mémoires*," Lescure's edition, bk. vi. vol. i. p. 51.

³ "*Mémoires*," Paris, 1870, 4 vols. 8vo., vol. iv. p. 293.

your feelings of condolence to Madame de la Trousse on this occasion." ¹

As for the guitar, Cominges' skill on this instrument is honourably mentioned by Madame de Motteville, who relates how young Louis the Fourteenth, being very fond of music, asked her own brother to play his part with Cominges "in the guitar concerts which the King had nearly every day." ²

Endowed with such accomplishments and an equally acceptable companion in times of peace and war, Cominges found, as it seems, no great difficulty in pleasing the beautiful Sibylle d'Amalbi, who had rejected several other suitors, and whom he married in 1643. She, too, became famous as the Césonie of the Précieuses group, and as "la belle Cominges" of the great monarch's Court. "Césonie," writes Somaize, in his "Dictionnaire des Précieuses," "is a Court Précieuse. She is very witty; she has a fine throat; she sometimes uses Hesperian produce [*i.e.*, Spanish paint]. She likes the play; she does not keep a regular *alcove*, for Court ladies do not follow rules in this matter. She lives in the palace of Seneca" ³ [*i.e.*, the Palais Royal, built by Richelieu].

At a time when portraits were the fashion, when Mdlle. de Scudéry filled her novels with descriptions of her friends, and Madame de Sévigné, Madame de la Fayette, and all the rest of the fine witty ladies of the day, rivalled one another in drawing portraits, Césonie

¹ "Lettres," ed. Tamizey de Larroque, Paris, 1880, 2 vols., 4to, vol. i. p. 405.

² "Mémoires," 1876, vol. iv. p. 90 (1657).

³ Livet's edition, 1856, vol. i. p. 55.

would not fail to be portrayed, and descriptions of her in verse and prose abound. We gather from a portrait made of her under the name of Emilie that she was not tall, but so perfect in her proportions that it is not possible to conceive how she could look better if taller. "She has such a pretty childish look and touching little ways that it is an impossibility not to love her." Her nose is thin and straight; her hair, somewhat loose, "of the finest colour in the world" (whatever that may be). The whiteness of her complexion "mixes so delicately with the pink of her cheeks that this masterpiece of nature has sometimes been suspected; but as she reddens in society, it is easy to understand that, if the red she has were of her own making, she would arrange so as not to be troubled with it out of time." The indiscreet author continues telling us how she has the finest leg and foot in the world, so perfect indeed "that there are few *men* who would not be pleased to have such," a compliment which we need a little history to make us understand, and which would not be thus expressed in our sans-culottist days.

With so many public and private perfections, the Belle Cominges, nevertheless, was modest; "her eyes have reigned over a thousand hearts, but she has never given her own away. . . . She does as the gods who accept prayers and sacrifices, and she considers that she does enough in not scorning proffered homages." She is a faithful friend, and a lively partner in conversation. Her only fault is that she sometimes feels depressed and melancholy without reason. She then retires from the world, and remains whole days nursing her sorrow; she then appears again in society, and shines with such

splendour that it is impossible to conceive she knows what sadness is. "She plays very well on the lute, and sings like an angel."¹

Versified gazettes of the time are full of her praise ; whenever there is a splendid fete she is sure to be named amongst the prettiest guests.²

She turns the head of many, and works ravages in the royal family itself. Of course people who pretended that the pink on her cheeks came from "*Hesperia*" were not slow in discovering, saying, and printing that hers was a sham coldness, and that she overstepped more than once the line which divides love and friendship ; but, of course, too, they were slanderers, and the best thing to do is not to believe them.

When she was with child the Court was troubled at the idea her beauty would be impaired ; and the gazettes informed the world at large of her gradual recovery and the coming back of her *incarnat* : "Her sweet, laughing eyes—had become less attractive—Cupid languished by her side." But she is improving apace, and now she is quite well ; let lovers look to themselves ! "Hearts

¹ "Recueil de portraits et éloges en vers et en prose, dédié à S. A. R. Mademoiselle." Paris, 1659, 2 vols., 8vo. (anonymous).

² At a ball given at the Louvre, in September, 1655,

"Le beau Marquis de Villeroy . . .
Menait Comminge ;"

While the King (then seventeen) danced with—

"L'infante Manciny,
Des plus sages et gracieuses
Et la perle des précieuses."

Loret, "*La Muze historique*," 1650-1665, ed. Ravenel and de la Pelouze, Paris, 1857 *et seq.*, vol. ii. p. 98.

that feel the allurements of charms divine—and know what it is to love—if you want to remain free—believe me, do not see her ! . . . If you are wise—it will be enough for your rest—that you mind this piece of news:—*La Belle Cominges est guérie.*"¹

Cominges had by her three sons and two daughters ; the sons became soldiers, and fought in the King's wars, one of them being killed in Germany ; of the daughters, one married, and the other became a nun. The eldest son was an aide-de-camp to Louis, and was held in great esteem and friendship by the King ; he was remarkable both by his height and size, and his bulk was the occasion of constant jests, which he sometimes allowed and sometimes did not. "The courtiers during the campaigns of the King," says St. Simon, "called, by joke, the bombs and mortars of the largest size, *des Cominges*, so that the word has become their technical name in artillery. Cominges considered this joke a very bad one, and could never get accustomed to it" ; but people did, and the word is still in use : "Cominges—sorte de grosse bombe," says Littré.

In 1653-4, Cominges followed the wars in Italy and Spain ; from 1657 to 1659 he was Ambassador to

¹ "Cœurs aux divins attraits sensibles
Qui d'amour êtes susceptibles,
Pour vous sauver de ses apas,
Croyez moi, ne la voyez pas . . .
Bref, vous conseillant à propos,
Il suffit pour votre repos
De dire à votre Seigneurie :
La belle Comminge est guarie."

Portugal,¹ and not long after his return was appointed, at the same time as his uncle Guitaut, a Knight of the Holy Ghost (December, 1661). The following year saw him Ambassador to England, where he was joined by his wife and eldest son : this, his last mission, is the one for which he especially deserves to be remembered.

¹ On his Portuguese mission, see Tamizey de Larroque, "Lettres du Comte de Cominges, 1657-1659," Pons, 1885, 8vo., and Vi-comte de Caix de St. Aymour, "Recueil des instructions aux Ambassadeurs de France—Portugal." Paris, 1886, 1 vol. 8vo.

CHAPTER III.

THE TONE AND MANNER OF THE CORRESPONDENCE.

COMINGES reached London on the 23rd of December, 1662 (O.S.), after having had a very bad crossing "in the yacht of Monsieur le duc d'York." In his first letter to the King he thus describes his journey in his usual Court style :—

"Sire, I would not mention to your Majesty the inconveniences I suffered in my journey on account of the floods, if I were not bound to do so to explain the length of the time I spent on the way. Not that I failed to constrain, so to say, the very elements to submit to your Majesty's wishes ; but all I could do, after having avoided two or three land-wrecks and escaped a tempest by sea, was to reach this place on December 23, English style."¹

From this day forth a double, not to say a treble, correspondence begins : an official one with the King, a more familiar one with Lionne, and we find fragments of a third one, containing only Court news, and destined again to the King, but not in his kingly capacity. Young Louis greatly appreciated those sepa-

¹ To the King. January 4, 1663.



HÉLIOO D'UJARDIN

J. P. WITTMANN PARIS

*Le Comte de Comingen?
Ambassador to England, 1662-1665.
from the portrait in the Clarendon Collection.*



rate sheets of worldly information, and Lionne several times begs the Ambassador not to forget them. No wonder this was so with a prince of twenty-four ; the real wonder is the personal care and attention with which the official correspondence was attended to by him, to the extent indeed of his being jealous of the private letters sent to Lionne by Cominges : " Though I always show to the King," Lionne writes, " the private letters with which you honour me, and that it might appear that it comes to the same, as his Majesty is equally well-informed, be the letter for him or for me, you must always, if you please, write direct to his Majesty, even when you have nothing else to say than that you have nothing to say. Write to me only three lines for the forwarding of the packet. I clearly saw the advantage of this plan when I read to his Majesty the last letter with which you favoured me ; for he then inquired why you did not write rather to himself. I answered that the cause was probably the want of any matter of sufficient importance. . . . But I think his Majesty did not hold this reason a sufficient one, and that he prefers you to do otherwise. You will also please him very much in continuing what you so handsomely began, and forwarding in a separate sheet the most curious of the Court news." ¹

In his attention to business Louis was truly great ; and he adhered all his life to his former resolve. He could in later years render to himself a testimony which is fully borne out by the huge mass of correspondence in the French archives. " I gave myself, as a law," we read in his Memoirs, " to work regularly twice a day,

¹ August 5, 1663.

for two or three hours each time, with various persons, without speaking of the hours I spent working by myself. . . . There was no moment when it was not allowed to speak to me about business if there was any urgency. I only excepted foreign ministers, who sometimes find in the familiarity allowed to them too favourable means to reach their ends or gather an insight into affairs. They ought not to be heard without preparation. I cannot say all the fruit I drew from the following of this plan. I felt as if my mind and courage were elated, and I discovered in myself what I did not suspect. . . . Then only it seemed to me that I was indeed a King, and born to be one.”¹

There is no vainglory in this, and not a word that is not supported by facts. When d’Estrades was Louis’s Ambassador in London, he had, not perhaps without some wonder, received a letter beginning thus : “Fontainebleau, August 5, 1661. Monsieur d’Estrades, I have resolved to answer myself all the letters I have asked my Ambassadors to write to me under cover of M. de Lionne, when the business is of importance and requires secrecy. And to begin this day with you. . . .”

Lionne on the same day had given d’Estrades full particulars of the way in which this plan was carried out, and his letter introduces us into the very closet of the King : “Those who believed that our master would soon tire of business”—the Queen-mother for one, may it be said *en passant*—“were greatly mistaken ; the more we go, the greater pleasure he takes

¹ “Mémoires de Louis XIV.,” ed. Dreyss, Paris, 1860, 2 vols., 8vo., vol. ii. pp. 386 and 427.

in devoting himself entirely to it. Of this you will find a convincing proof in the enclosed dispatch, where you will see how his Majesty has resolved to answer himself all the letters of his Ambassadors on the more important and secret affairs . . . This thought occurred to him spontaneously, and well may you believe that no one would have been so bold as to propose to him that he should take so much trouble. . . . In this manner are Kings apprenticed to greatness, and I wonder whether, since France is a monarchy, there has been any King to take upon himself such a heavy task, or one more useful for himself and for the welfare and glory of his people and his State.

“ Things are arranged thus. I have the honour to read to him, after they have been deciphered, the more secret dispatches directed to him under my cover. He then does me the honour of retaining me, and telling me his intentions concerning the answer. I work at it in his presence and under his eye, article after article, and his Majesty checks me when I do not adhere quite closely to his idea.” The work being done, the dispatch is ciphered, and then his Majesty signs it with his own hand, “ and not with a borrowed hand, as is the custom when he has to do with his Secretaries of State.” Lionne as we know had not that title.¹

The correspondence at the French Foreign Office constantly shows the personal interference of the King, and brings into light the care and attention with which he read his envoys' reports. He over and over again asks them to draw up for him memoirs on the more

¹ August 5, 1661. Lionne became Secretary of State in April, 1663.

obscure points of the institutions of the countries where they reside, and from Lionne's private letters we gather that far from putting aside the bulky documents when they came in, he read them and pored over them with great industry and patience. His thirst for knowledge in political matters was truly insatiable. We shall see him by and by asking Cominges to write for him reports concerning English Parliaments, navy, currency,¹ religion, wars, nay, and even literature.

If he falls ill he stops his work for as short a time as possible, and resumes it again long before he is out of the physician's hands. In 1663 he catches the measles, and Lionne forwards to Cominges the following only too graphic description of the sufferings of the monarch :—

“Owing to your being abroad you will have escaped the mortal fright we had for two days last week, for you will hear of the King being well again at the same time as you learn he has been ill. When the last ordinary left for England, his Majesty who had come the day before to Versailles, had been scarcely touched yet by the disease ; but it soon declared itself, and it was discovered with a sorrow you can well imagine that

¹ “Quand je partis de la Cour, S. M. me commanda de lui donner quelque connaissance de la monnaie d'Angleterre. Vous trouverez dans votre paquet un petit mémoire que je vous prie de Lui présenter.” (Cominges to Lionne, February 26, 1663.) Cominges goes on to say that the French louis received on account of the sale of Dunkirk are about to be turned into English crowns ; but their stay in England will not last very long. “Ce sont nos louis blancs que l'on va travestir en crownes, et si l'acquisition de Dunkerque nous les a ravis, les vins de Gascogne nous les rapporteront.”

it was the measles. He had caught it from his being constantly with the Queen when she was attacked by the same. You know perhaps that this disease is never free from danger for patients above twenty ; and it is impossible in fact to be more ill than the King was all the day and night of the Thursday, and the morning of the Friday till noon. I am still shaking with horror when I think of it. There was a very violent fever, and great oppression in the chest, a furious headache, a dry cough, and qualms, and a looseness of the bowels, which never allowed him a moment's rest. From Friday noon all went better and better ; his body was covered with measles, which is as good a symptom as one can wish. For it is necessary Nature should have power to push outside the venom which otherwise seizes upon and oppresses the heart, and in this lies all the peril. The King from that hour felt quite free, . . . and to make you better understand what are the temper and health of our master, know you that this Prince, whose life physicians considered still in jeopardy a quarter before twelve on Friday, worked after dinner as usual for three hours with M. le Tellier and myself on the Saturday, that is yesterday. We are summoned for to-day, at the same hour, and I shall read to his Majesty your dispatch of the 28th, as I had the honour of reading to him yesterday the preceding one, bearing the date of the 24th." ¹

Three days later the King himself resumes his correspondence with Cominges, and after having expressed his regret that he was not able, owing to the malady, to answer sooner the two above-mentioned letters, he

¹ To Cominges. June 3, 1663.

enters again on the discussion of the intended treaty with England, and inquires as to the dealings of Charles with the Spaniard.¹

He was too young, however, not to be sometimes more jocose, and as Cominges was in a manner a friend and familiar of the house, he sometimes sent to him kindly amusing epistles which must have cheered the heart of the faithful diplomatist and soldier. Answering at the same time one of the numerous complaints of Cominges concerning the weight of the expenses he had to bear, and alluding to an absurd accusation of Spanish tendencies launched against the Ambassador, Louis writes: "I never knew I had made choice of a Spaniard to intrust him with all my affairs in England. The London air must have very powerful qualities to have turned Castilian a heart which I considered more French and fuller of zeal for my service than any I knew. I am, however, so stubborn that though you have proved a turn-coat, I will not alter my early judgment of you, and I am resolved to continue and trust myself to that rebellious heart. I have even ordered this morning to the Sieur Colbert, to report to me concerning your salary, in case the thing has not been settled even before you wrote. Do not fail in the meantime to serve my royal father-in-law in the same way as you have done till now. It will give me great satisfaction, so affectionately I take part in what concerns him."²

Cominges answered, we may well believe, with many bows and courtesies, not forbearing however to have, he too, his joke, to say his say and state his opinion. He

¹ June 6, 1663.

² June 6, 1663.

was of course more free-spoken with Lionne, to whom his most amusing letters are directed, but he did not think that characteristic trifles were outside the pale of diplomatic correspondence. The main difference between the two sets of letters lies in the literary care with which he tried, when addressing the King, to group and arrange the compound parts of his speech. He had obviously a classic ideal before his eyes; nearly everybody had one in those days; Ambassadors' dispatches were dispatches with porticoes. Having once drawn up a regular exordium for one of his letters, he explains to the King that he thought proper to do so, "in order to give this dispatch a shape, and not to send it to your Majesty as an uncouth monster without a head and feet."¹ His verbal communications, even, were prepared with care, and Quintilian's precepts were appropriately remembered. He once applies for an appointment to discuss important matters with Charles, and gets it much earlier than he had foreseen. "Such haste," he writes, "might have staggered me, if I had not luckily spent all the night in preparing what I had to say and giving it a shape which, without derogating from the dignity of the matter, was not devoid of such pleasant insinuations as would secure for me a more attentive hearing."²

The means of conveying this correspondence were various. There were special messengers; but the Ambassador as well as the King used also the "ordinares," that is, the common post. There was only one delivery each week in Paris and in London. The

¹ January 25, 1663.

² March 26, 1663.

Paris "ordinaire" left every Sunday at noon.¹ Ambassadors were careful, when using the post, to cipher the more important parts of their letters; a very useful precaution, for packets were constantly tampered with, and there were recriminations and protests on both sides of the Channel. Sometimes the opening of the letters takes place in England, and Louis's agent informs him how two clerks of the post have been discovered to have accepted two thousand *pistoles* from that evil-minded person Watteville, and how Charles has declared that they will be hanged, so that the thing will never happen again. But it did. Sometimes the same operation is carried on in France, and then the London merchants do not hesitate to make "un sabat de diables." In his correspondence with his sister, Madame, Duchess of Orléans, Charles the Second constantly complains of their letters being opened at the post. Cominges, on his side, leaves to the Marquis de Ruvigny, who is going back to France, the care of informing his Majesty "of many particularities of which it is dangerous to write. They have here tricks to open letters more skilfully than anywhere in the world. Some even go the length of fancying that it is the thing to do (*cela a le bel air*), and that it is not possible to be a great statesman without tampering with packets."²

Accidents on the road were sometimes also the cause of delay in the delivery and deciphering of the letters. "One of your letters," Cominges writes to Lionne, "happened to be in the pocket of a courier who got

¹ And later, every Saturday. Cominges to Lionne. September 11, 1664.

² To the King. January 8, 1665.

drowned near Boulogne. It was recovered in such a bad state that it is almost impossible to use it, and you would do well to send me another with the same contents." ¹ Again there are occasions when the weather is so bad that there is no crossing for eight days.²

Another means of corresponding was to use the cover of a third person, in order not to rouse the curiosity of postal officers. "If you will sometimes write to me under cover of a merchant," says Cominges, "you can address your letters to M. Aymé, surgeon, 'Rue Rose Straet,' in the Common Garden, and I will send mine to M. Simonnet, banker, in Paris." ³ This was a very simple means of eluding official inquisitiveness, so simple indeed, easy and obvious, that it is not quite certain it has entirely fallen into disuse.

¹ April 9, 1663.

² Batailler (secretary to d'Estrades) to the King. November 30, 1662.

³ To Lionnc. January 8, 1663.

CHAPTER IV.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE.

WHEN an ambassador writes of a street called "Rue Rose Straet," his knowledge of English may well be doubted. In the case of Cominges no doubt is possible ; he never knew a word, and never could catch a sound, or a syllable of it. He did not even suspect, as we see, that the words *Rue* and *street* had a similar meaning. He seems, to his honour be it said, to have objected on this account to his own appointment to London ; but his objection was over-ruled, as well it might be : appointments to England would have been difficult indeed if the King had expected from his envoys a knowledge of English. Cominges, as well as most among his predecessors and successors for a long time (d'Estrades, however, being an exception), made not the faintest approach to an understanding of the simplest words. He and his successors write of the Dukes of Boquinqan and Momous, of the Milords Ladredel, Pitrebaro, and Fichardin ; of "the King going to Oüindsor, the Queen to Bristau, and Madame to Qinzinton," of the Court moving to Omtoncourt ; of the religion of the Kakers, Caquiers, or Coaquiers ; of a

stay at Wlidge and at Tonnebriche, of "la petite Genins," and so on ; meaning the not unknown names of Buckingham, Monmouth, Lauderdale, Peterborough, Fitzhardin, Windsor, Bristol, Kensington, Hampton Court, Quakers, Woolwich, Tunbridge, Jennings.

No wonder, therefore, that the simplest words would acquire in the judgment of the Ambassador a sort of mysterious power. A very witty letter being read at Court in the royal circle, Cominges thus describes the admiration it elicited : "Whereupon every one cried, *Very wel, very wel!* The Comte de Gramont will explain to your Majesty the energy and strength of this English sentence."¹

We see at a later date Cominges, Courtin, and Verneuil, the three having been appointed together Ambassadors extraordinary to England, forwarding to France the speech from the throne, and remarking on its contents : "We forward you a translation of the speeches of the King of Great Britain and his Chancellor. The author of it assures us that it is a very faithful one ; he begs only to be excused for having followed the turn of the English sentences, and he says that M. le Chancelier is obscure in his expressions. We must trust him in this, as we do not know the language, and all we can do is to assure you that he did his best and took great trouble in trying to translate accurately the more important places."²

In the same manner, in later years, the Comte de Broglie, Ambassador to England during the minority of Louis XV., goes sometimes to the "Drerum," and sometimes to the "Driwrome," of the Princess of

¹ To the King. November 6, 1664. ² November 1, 1665.

Wales, and describes at great length in his correspondence the political feuds between the "wicks" and the "thoris."

The "Journal des Sçavans" was for many years scarcely better informed; learned as were its contributors, their ignorance of English was complete. In 1665 a characteristic little note appeared in the paper, intimating that "the Royal Society of London publishes day by day a number of excellent works; but as they are mostly written in the English language it has been impossible till now to review them in this journal. But we have at last secured an English interpreter (un interprète anglais), thanks to whom our paper will be henceforth enriched with notices of the best things published in England." We accordingly find afterwards mention of a new edition of a poet called "Shakees Pear" (1710), and of a book, "fade et grossier," called "A Tale of a Tub" (1721).

As for Cominges, he did his best to make up for his deficiency, and as everybody in society spoke French, his troubles on this account were not unendurable. An important exception, was the Lord Chancellor Clarendon, who was, however, to have in after-times more leisure than he expected to improve on the spot his knowledge of the language of his neighbours. When Cominges had to deal with him, and, which happened more rarely, with lord mayors and aldermen, he had to call in an interpreter. Reporting an important interview he had with the Chancellor to treat of the Spanish and Portuguese war, Cominges writes: "He came to receive me at the door of his hall, and gave me audience in his closet, where the Sieur Bennet

remained to act as an interpreter. In order that we might the better understand each other, I divided my speech into eight or ten points, to which the Chancellor answered ; and then, through the *Sieur Bennet*, I received the answers." ¹ From this it appears that *Clarendon* was able to understand but not to speak French.

With the help of his interpreters and of the French-speaking members of the aristocracy, *Cominges* gathered information on English politics and institutions as best he could, to the satisfaction of his Government. "Without flattery," *Lionne* answers, on the receipt of a lengthy dispatch on the variety of religions in England, "nothing could be clearer, better put in writing, wiser and more solid ; and given this, you can easily console yourself for not being able to articulate one word of English."

On one occasion, at least, the Ambassador's anxieties, one may suppose, ought to have been great. For the King himself, strange as it may seem, wrote to have a full report, not on politics, religion, or trade, but, of all things, on literature. This, undoubtedly, sounds very much to his honour ; by this curious move the Great Monarch was on the verge, long before *Voltairean* times, of discovering *Shakespeare*. I have pointed out elsewhere that copies of the works of the master-dramatist were then in existence in some French libraries ; *Surintendant Fouquet* had one, which was sold with the rest of his books after his trial ; another copy found its way into quite an unlooked-for place—in the very library of the patron of *Racine* and *Boileau*, in the collection of the Sun-King himself. There it lay, very

¹ To the King. March 26, 1663.

little read, one may be sure, looking so queer, so unexpected, so uncouth that the Royal librarian when making his catalogue thought it proper to add to the name and title a few observations, for the King, courtiers, and savants to know what the thing was they handled ; and the thing was accordingly thus described by Nicolas Clément, *bibliothécaire royal*, in one of his slips, the original of which is still preserved in the public library in Paris, where I found it some years ago :—

“ *Will. Shakspeare, poeta anglicus.* . . . This poet has a somewhat fine imagination ; his thoughts are natural, his words ingeniously chosen, but these happy qualities are obscured by the dirt he introduces in his plays.”¹

Such is the earliest sentence passed upon Shakespeare by a compatriot of Molière : a somewhat fine imagination was his best point. A large number of years was to elapse before Victor Hugo would discover in him one of the few “hommes océans” of humanity.

The King’s instructions which were obviously prompted by something beyond mere literary curiosity, were as follows : “ I will end my dispatch by an order which I should like you to fulfil with the greatest care. I want you to inquire, without any one suspecting that I may have written to you about it, and as if you were impelled by your own curiosity, what are within the three kingdoms, the persons notorious and

¹ “ *Will Shakspeare poeta anglicus.* . . . Ce poète a l’imagination assez belle, il pense naturellement, il s’exprime avec finesse ; mais ces belles qualités sont obscurcies par les ordures qu’il mêle à ses comédies.” (About 1680.)

excellent above all others in all sorts of knowledge. You will forward to me an accurate list of them, indicating of what blood they are, whether rich or poor, what line of study they follow, what genius they are endowed with. My intention is to be informed of all that is best and exquisite in all countries, and in all branches of knowledge, and to make the best of such information for my service and my glory. But this quest must be carried on with the greatest care and accuracy, without the persons I speak of, nor any other, being able to suspect my intentions or your doings.”¹

What was Cominges’s answer to the royal question? Just what might be expected from such a perfect courtier, well read in his classics, and a sincere admirer of his own country’s literature: “The order I receive from your Majesty to gather carefully information concerning the more illustrious men of the three kingdoms of which Great Britain is made”—this sentence is ciphered in the original—“is a mark of the grandeur and loftiness of your soul. Nothing could seem to me more glorious, and your Majesty will perhaps allow me to congratulate him for a thought so worthy of a great monarch, and one which will not render him less illustrious in future centuries than the storming of a town or the winning of a battle. Moved by my own curiosity, and being constantly bent upon the furthering of your Majesty’s service and glory, I had already sketched out a plan to enlighten myself on the subject, but I was not well pleased with it. It seems that arts and sciences do entirely leave one country sometimes to

¹ March 25, 1663; the draft as usual in the hand of Lionne; the same was sent to d’Estrades in Holland.

go and adorn another in its turn. They appear at present to have chosen France as their abode ; and if some traces of them are to be discovered here, it is only in the memory of Bacon, Morus and Buchanan, and in later times of a man called Miltonius (un nommé Miltonius) who has rendered himself more infamous by his noxious writings than the very tormentors and assassins of their King. I will not fail, however, to collect information with great care, and I will do it the more willingly, as nothing in the world seems to me more worthy of your Majesty.”¹

What further information Cominges gathered we know not. Perhaps he found his difficulties increase the more he sought to improve his knowledge, and had to encounter insuperable obstacles when he tried to ascertain what was the literary worth of “le nommé Miltonius,” in his capacity as Lycidas or Penseoso Milton. Well might the Sun-King pity his neighbours whose literature consisted in the works of four Latin authors, one of them an infamous man.

Cominges’s dispatch is the more remarkable, as he was conformably to his own assertion, a great friend of books, literature, and authors. But the classic ideal was constantly before his mind ; in his official letters he brings forward the example of the Romans to corroborate his own recommendations ; he quotes Plato,² Aristotle, Erasmus, and Bacon ; he beguiles the long, empty hours of the days he has to spend in London by reading the best authors of antiquity. For he finds

¹ April 2, 1663.

² “ Nous ne vivons pas sous la république de Platon ; l’égalité a ses bornes et son étendue.”—To Lionne, September 25, 1664.

himself, he declares, to Lionne, in a country "where Idleness reigns seated on his throne. Had I not a taste for study I should find myself a man to be pitied above all others ; but I hold converse with the best men (*les plus honnêtes gens*) of antiquity ; they are so kind as to let me come to them and leave them without a bow or excuse. My communications with them are free of expense, and that is a comfort. Without their being the poorer for it, I enrich myself with their spoils, thanks to which I will be enabled to appear some day before you very decently equipped."¹ He would have bitterly suffered in his ambassadorial pride if he could have imagined why so much "*oisiveté*" was his lot ; but more of this hereafter.

Cominges was curious not only about books, but also about men. Besides larger dinner parties with Charles and his royal brother, and his little "Momous," and his beautiful Castlemaine, he had little dinners for the more interesting among the philosophers and savants of his acquaintance ; people with whom it was possible to discuss politics in the abstract and to quote the example of the Romans. We see thus at his table no less illustrious guests than Huygens van Zuylichem, well known already by his invention of the pendulum-clock,² and Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury. The

¹ December 3, 1663.

² Evelyn mentions his dining with Huygens : "I dined with that great mathematician and virtuoso, Monsieur Zuylichem, inventor of the pendule clock" (April 1, 1661). In 1666 Huygens settled in Paris, where he remained for fifteen years and became a member of the Academy of Sciences. He died in 1695 ; his complete works are in course of publication : "*Œuvres complètes de Christian Huygens*," publiées par la Société Hollandaise des Sciences ; La Haye, 4to (fourth vol. in the press).

former was staying in England entrusted with a mission to forward the interests of a young prince destined to play no small part in the history of the country, namely, the Prince of Orange, then a boy, not yet married to James's daughter. The latter Cominges patronises very much, seeing in him a useful "bonhomme," worthy to be enrolled among Louis the Fourteenth's servants as a defender of royal authority, and of the divine rights of kings. He appeals to Lionne to pension him on this account, and to let the pension be delivered through his own hands.

Cominges on this occasion sends home the following characteristic account of the "bonhomme," then in his seventy-fifth year : "In two days Messieurs de Zuylichem, d'Hobbes, and de Sorbières are going to dine at my house ; we will not fail to speak of you after we have eulogized our master. The 'bonhomme,' Mr. Hobbes, is in love with his Majesty's person ; we never meet without his asking me a thousand questions about him. He always concludes with exclamations and with appropriate wishes for the King. As his Majesty has often shown an intention to do good to this sort of people, I will venture to say that he will never have a better occasion than this. Mr. Hobbes may truly be called *Assertor Regum*, as his works show. As for our own sovereign, he has made him his hero. If all this could obtain for him some gift, I beg that I might be the means. I will know how to make the most of it ; and I believe that never will any favour have been better placed." ¹

In his answer Lionne assures Cominges of the

¹ July 23, 1663.





HUYGENS

From the engraving by Edelinck

intention of the King to give something to Hobbes, but it remains doubtful whether the inclination of Louis to benefit "ces sortes de gens" was extended in fact to the author of "Leviathan."

"I wish," he says, "I had been able to be your fourth guest at the dinner you were to give to Messieurs de Zuylichem, Hobbes, and Sorbières. The King, I see, is greatly inclined to pension the second; but pray, do not bind his Majesty to anything before I am able to write to you more precisely about it. If it is resolved that something be given him, you may be sure it will be through your hands. His Majesty has already stated that such was his intention."¹

Whatever may have been the case of Hobbes, certain it is that the two other guests became pensioners of Louis. In the curious lists which have been preserved of his liberalities, which offer to the modern eye such a strange medley of names, we find such entries as these:—

"To the Sieur Pierre Corneille, the
greatest dramatic poet in the world 2,000 livres.

"To the Sieur Sorbières, well in-
structed in human letters ... 1,000 livres.

"To the Sieur Racine, a French poet 300 livres.

"To the Sieur Chapelain, the greatest
French poet that has ever been,
with the most solid judgment ... 3,000 livres."²

Further are found the names of Heinsius, Vossius,

¹ August 1, 1663.

² "Œuvres de Louis XIV.," Paris, 1806, 6 vols. 8vo, vol. i.
pp. 223, *et seq.*

Cominges's guest Huygens, "Beklerus," &c. Sorbières, who thus appears with greater honour on the list than the "French poet" Racine, but with less than "the greatest French poet that has ever been," Chapelain, availed himself of the opportunities offered by his stay in England to write a book full of praise of, but with some unkind remarks on, English society. Clarendon he declared to be a good jurist, but nothing more. The appearance of the book in 1664¹ created quite a stir; Louis was not long in making up his mind; judging that Sorbières had been indiscreet, he suppressed at once both the author and his work: the first being shut up in the Bastille, and afterwards exiled to Lower Brittany; the second being ordered to be destroyed, and a proclamation read throughout Paris, in which the King redeemed the character of his "well-beloved and deeply-esteemed" Clarendon.²

Cominges, whom Sorbières had given trouble to, by his inconsiderate publication, took very lightly the chastisement inflicted upon him, and wrote to Lionne:

¹ "Relation d'un voyage en Angleterre, où sont touchées plusieurs choses qui regardent l'état des sciences et de la religion et autres matières curieuses." Paris, 1664, 8vo; translated into English, 1709.

² Considering that the author "se donne la licence d'avancer contre la vérité diverses choses au désavantage de la nation anglaise, a l'audace de porter calomnieusement son jugement sur les qualités personnelles et sur la conduite d'un des principaux Ministres du Roi de la Grande Bretagne (lequel Ministre Sa Majesté aime, estime et considère beaucoup) . . ."—See Ravaisson, "Archives de la Bastille," Paris, 1868, 8vo., vol. iii. p. 425.

“The exile of the *Sieur Sorbières* to Lower Brittany has been very well conceived, for we have no true and trustworthy relation concerning that country. He will be enabled to prepare one, and even to learn the language of the place, which though of barbarous appearance is not, it is said, without some beauties of its own.” He was not, however, allowed to stay there long enough for this kind wish to be fulfilled, for the punishment was soon considered, even in England, to have been carried far enough, and good-natured Charles asked that the culprit might be pardoned. This was granted, but not before *Cominges* had had to interfere in his turn, and in a different direction: for replies were being prepared by “*Messieurs de l’académie*,” that is, of the English Academy or Royal Society, then recently created: “Having heard that some members of the English Academy, as indiscreet as the *Sieur de Sorbières*, were sharpening their pens to answer him, I spoke to the King of Great Britain, who has undertaken to stop them and to have the materials they had already prepared brought to him, under threat of punishment. Were this skirmish allowed, the thing would never end; it would only enrage the more two nations between whom there is no love lost, and which want more to be softened by fair play than soured by reproaches and abuse.”¹ *Sorbières* was allowed to come back, but having not become much the wiser for his stay among the long-haired Celts of Armorica,

¹ To the King. July 21, 1664. An answer was, however, published the next year by Thomas Sprat (Bishop of Rochester): “*Observations on Mr. Sorbier’s voyage—Sed poterat tutior esse domi.*” London, 1665.

he lived to play, it is said, the most absurd tricks upon his two famous correspondents Hobbes and Gassendi. Sceptic as they were in many things, both, strangely enough, chose to place their faith in Sorbières, who took good care to teach them that they ought to have gone at least one step further in their doubts.¹

Among the men with a name in literature whom Cominges used to meet in London were, besides the three above named, Buckingham, Sir William Temple, "a man the more dangerous as he does not lack wit nor influence,"² Gramont, whose mad pranks the Ambassador notices, as we shall see, usually with some indulgence, but from time to time with sharpness and severity.

Saint Evremont also is named here and there in Cominges's letters, and the Ambassador does all he can to show that the old man deserves a better fate and that the order for his exile ought to be repealed. On the occasion of his official "entrée," Cominges writes to the King : "The Frenchmen present in this Court have done their duty, and the Chevalier de Gramont appeared with the same magnificence as is his wont on such occasions. Poor St. Evremont shone less, and wore a more afflicted look ; he would be in absolute despair had he not some hope that your Majesty will at length pardon a fault which was much more the doing of his wit than of his heart."³

This appeal to pity was reiterated the next year by the Marquis de Ruvigny, who had been sent to England on a temporary mission : "St. Evremont is greatly

¹ He gave, it is said, to each as being his own the letters of the other and rose accordingly (for a time) in their esteem (Ravaisson, *ibid.*). Having been disabled by dropsy, he poisoned himself in 1670.

² To Lionne. June 25, 1663.

³ April 19, 1663.

broken for want of health and money ; the King of England gave him yesterday a pension of three hundred jacobuses. His state is pitiable." ¹

But this too was of no avail, and poor St. Evremont, one of the many admirers of Madame de Cominges and of the Duchess Mazarin, was doomed not to see his country again, but to die in England, a very old man, in 1703.

¹ To Lionne. June 22, 1665.

CHAPTER V.

ETIQUETTE AND COURT NEWS.

I. *Cominges's Entrée.*

HAVING had to replace d'Estrades, it is no wonder that Cominges paid very great attention to etiquette, and that his letters are full of particulars as to ceremonial and precedence. The stiffness of the rules, and the importance of the smallest items, seem at the present day very strange, people being no longer accustomed to such a tone of deep seriousness in matters of this sort, except in dispatches referring to imperial courts in Asia.

When he first came to England, Cominges had to face the unpleasant necessity of making his solemn *entrée* into London. Personally he was for avoiding the thing altogether, for a cause very often alluded to in his dispatches, namely, the expense. He felt the more inclined to this as a splendid *entrée* had just been made by Muscovite envoys, and the Ambassador experienced great anxiety how, with an indifferently well-furnished purse, he could compete with these wondrous northern people. A few days after his arrival in England he informs Lionne of the coming of "the Amba-

sador of the Grand Duke of Muscovy, whom they call here Emperor," and thus describes the entrée : " You will know, sir, that an entrée on an unparalleled scale was arranged for him ; all the merchants were under arms ; the aldermen, who are what we call *échevins*, went to pay him a visit and congratulate him upon his coming ; the King defrays all his expenses and provides him with lodgings. After a month's stay he had to-day his audience, when fifteen or sixteen foot soldiers were under arms. . . . His coach was admitted into Whitehall, contrary to custom. He did not, it is true, cover himself when talking to the King of Great Britain ; but as for me, and whatever the English may say, I do believe that it is not so much out of respect for his Majesty as out of pride ; for they hope by this means to prevent the English Ambassador from covering himself when addressing the Muscovite Prince. All I think we can reasonably pretend to is admittance for our coach into Whitehall ; for the additional pomp displayed in the entrée into town had no cause but the interests of the London merchants who trade with Muscovy, and in consideration of which they treated him to such a *fanfare*." ¹

A very fine sight it was, doubtless, so many "wealthy citizens in their black velvet coats and gold chains," and the Ambassador's suite "in their habits and fur caps, very handsome, comely men, and most of them with hawks upon their fists to present to the King." A very fine sight ! " But, Lord ! to see the absurd nature of Englishmen, that cannot forbear laughing

¹ To Lionne. December 29, 1662.

and jeering at everything that looks strange." These last remarks are not Cominges's but Pepys's.

Not at all jealous of the "fanfare," with the laughing and jeering accompaniments, Cominges goes on to suggest that it would be advisable for him to abstain altogether, and not to make any entrée at all. It would save him a large sum of money, and everybody would be pleased. But Louis would not assent, and he wrote in answer a dispatch of enormous length, in which all the particulars of the Muscovite entrée and of the attitude Cominges ought to observe are examined with a scrupulous eye. Still, so grave is the matter, that the King will not adopt as yet definite resolutions, and all this long memoir contains only provisional instructions; nay, merely counsels and suggestions. First, there is a remarkable "*chapitre des chapeaux*":

"All that follows must be taken by you as nothing more than a piece of advice; it has been shaped according to the opinions it has been possible to form at a distance; do not consider it as orders you are bound to follow.

"Firstly, I deem that you ought, before everything, confidentially to inquire from Chevalier Bennet, or even from the King, the true reason why the Moscow Ambassadors did not put on their hats. I see that, according to you, the cause is that the Czar, their master, does not allow the ambassadors of other princes to cover themselves before him, and that therefore they did not insist, so as to preserve that advantage to him. But all this seems to be reduced to nought by what the Danish Ambassador here reports,

for he has said to the Sieur de Lionne . . ." (and so on, and on. . .).

Another great question is to know whether Cominges ought to "donner la main" to them—that is, not to shake them by the hand, but to allow them to walk and stand on his right side when they come to see him,¹ a question the more delicate as in not covering themselves they have "derogated," and placed themselves, of their own accord, in an inferior situation. Ought they to be raised from this lower degree? Cominges is ordered to think the matter over, and ponder over it, and choose and decide only when he has first resolved the hat problem. "And in case you resolve to concede to them the right-hand side in your house, then one more question remains—that is, to know whether you ought to allow this privilege to the three"—for there were three Muscovite envoys—"upon which I will tell you that, provided that there be no marked inequality between the three, and that they be endowed with the same capacity and power, you must not hesitate to do so." A thorny and difficult point; "donner, prendre, céder la main" was of the highest importance. When French troops were sent to help the Dutch in 1666, Louis was careful to state that they would not "céder la main," but have the honour to go under fire, standing on the right side of the army.

¹ "*Donner la main* est aussi faire honneur à quelqu'un en le mettant à sa droite, en lui cédant le pas, le haut du pavé et toutes les places honorables.—Honorabiliorem locum cedere—Cet Ambassadeur ne donnait chez lui la main à personne" ("Dictionnaire de Trévoux").

As for Cominges's own *entrée*, to avoid it entirely is an absolute impossibility, for the custom would spread, and Louis would then be deprived of the means "to show the people that the Spanish Ambassador does no longer compete with the French for precedence."¹ The King, as we perceive, was bent upon preventing Mr. Pepys and all the Pepyses innumerable in London and elsewhere, from recording the Watteville incident as "a disgrace for ever" to the French name.

But here a new difficulty arose. As a consequence of the d'Estrades affair, Charles had rendered a decree forbidding ambassadors henceforth to send their coaches to follow the carriage of any new-comer making his *entrée*. A fresh negotiation for the repeal of this decree had to be begun, and again letters of prodigious length were exchanged on this point. Cominges, on his part, taught, as it seems by the example of his predecessor, displayed such zeal that Louis himself found it went too far, and wrote to pacify him somewhat: "I have received your ample dispatch of the 19th. . . . I have seen with what zeal and firmness you have supported a demand in which you consider my glory to be interested. . . . I did not expect less from your affection, and I feel very grateful for it. . . . But as in matters so weighty, I do not mean to act with any haste, I shall wait, before I take a resolution, the coming of the special envoy of the King of England whom you mention. . . . Mind, in the meantime, to soften as much as you can what sourness may now exist. . . . If there is any unpleasant answer

¹ The King to Cominges. January 21, 1663.

to give, it is better I give it myself, for it is necessary you be always considered in England as doing your best, so that your person and function remain agreeable to them. For the same reason, if the answer be pleasant, I shall let you give it.”¹

The special envoy comes—Trevor by name.² Louis finds him at first “d’une grande sécheresse.” Trevor asserts that the repeal of the decree is an impossibility; to risk again such a fray as Watteville and d’Estrades caused would imperil the very crown of Charles. All he can offer is to secure to the French Ambassador precedence *indoors*, and even this he refuses to state in writing. But in writing Louis the Fourteenth would have it—and got it at last. His reasons were “that we are all mortal men. Maybe such an occurrence as happened will not recur again for sixty years, and I therefore would greatly like to leave to the Dauphin a proof of the justice and goodwill of the King of Great Britain, which he will be able to exhibit when time and men have altered. There will be thus, even then, no difficulty.”³ At length the parties agreed to a note, which had to be several times revised and corrected (a draft with corrections in the handwriting of Lionne still exists).⁴ It was signed and handed to Louis on the 29th of March. “The King, my master,” Trevor says in it, “has ordered me to give to your Majesty his pledge, that in case it be found impossible for his own safety to repeal the ‘resolution’ he took in the

¹ February 25, 1663.

² Later Sir John Trevor, and a Secretary of State.

³ March 14, 1663.

⁴ French Foreign Office, “Angleterre,” vol. lxxxi. No. 80.

year 1661, he will, at least on all the occasions when a concourse of people is not to be feared, such as balls, banquets, marriages, and other ceremonies taking place at Whitehall, and in the royal houses, or in the royal presence, secure for the French Ambassador, in all good faith and sincerity, the precedence which Spain has ceded to him."—Signed: "Jean Trevor."

Cominges is therefore ordered to make his *entrée* without the accompaniment of the diplomatic coaches, and he will observe that Trevor was not allowed to call in his note the decree of 1661 a decree, but only a resolution, "the other word being hateful (*odieux*) when the question is of Ambassadors, concerning the conduct of whom no one can decree anything except their own sovereigns."¹

The *entrée* took place, and was adorned with all the pomp of a lord mayor's show; there was no bloodshed, and Cominges was able to send home a glowing account of the ceremony, which we unfortunately cannot check with Pepys's description, Mr. Pepys being on that day busy elsewhere. He was at Hyde Park, and "at the Park was the King, and in another coach my Lady Castlemaine, they greeting one another at every turn."²

While this smiling went on, Cominges at the other end of the town was performing his sham landing at Greenwich, and was decorously entertained by the people and officials. "You will know that all things being prepared and arranged on both sides, on the 14th of this month, the Under-Master of the Ceremonies

¹ The King to Cominges. April 1, 1663.

² April 4, 1663 (O.S.)

called at my house, there to take and carry me with three barges of the King to 'Grennitche,' this being the place where ambassadors are received to be escorted to London. No sooner was I there than the Master of the Ceremonies came with five or six officers of the household, and, having complimented me upon my arrival, informed me that 'M. le Comte d'Evinchères' [Earl of Devonshire] would soon be there to receive and lead me on behalf of his master. One hour later he came with a large escort, with six gentlemen of the bedchamber and four barges of the King, one of which, a magnificently decorated one, he asked me to enter, after having explained by whose orders he had come to receive me.

"As soon as we had embarked, the ships in the harbour fired. During the journey the talk was upon the greatness of [our] King and his fine qualities. On my part I was not found dumb on those of the King of England. We reached the Tower, where the royal flag had been unfurled, which is the highest compliment that can be paid to an Ambassador. Some of the Royal guards were drawn along the water for my landing to be more easy, and for the keeping out of the way the people who had congregated in prodigious numbers.

"I was made to enter the King's coach, which is a magnificent one. I sat in it with the 'Comte d'Evinchères,' my son, and the Master of Ceremonies. We stopped some time to allow the Under Master to set in motion more than fifty coaches, drawn by six horses, and a variety of others. As soon as we began to proceed, a salute of one hundred and four guns was fired

from the Tower, viz., seventy for the Ambassador, twenty for the King, and the rest for the Governor. I saw the order of repartition signed by the Secretary of State. The drive extended to about a league, and took place among such a concourse of people, with so many coaches at the corners of the streets, that we wanted nearly three hours to cover the distance.

“At length, in the midst of this multitude, I reached my house, where I thanked my conductor ; I accompanied him to his coach, and I paid compliments to all those who had come with him by order of the King. I was then visited on his behalf by the son of the High Chamberlain, and, the day after, on behalf of the Queens and the Duke and Duchess of York. The day after, which was Sunday, I was visited by various persons of quality, ‘M. le duc de Buquinhams’ being the first to call. My audience was fixed for the Tuesday at three.

“‘M. le Comte de Belhfort’ [Bedford] came to take me by order of the King, with as many if not more coaches than on the day of my entrée. I was led to Whitehall, the Guards being drawn in a line, with the drums beating, and the cavalry sounding their trumpets. I went on, still seated in the King’s coach, by which doing I received the same honour as was allowed to the Muscovites ; my own coaches remained outside, and I would not ask for more, as it would have been contrary to custom. The thing, besides, is considered as of little import in this Court.”

Cominges then sees the King and Queen ; and a considerable quantity of bows and compliments are exchanged. “On the following day I had an audience of

the Queen-mother, who, to oblige the King,¹ wished that my coaches might be allowed into her yard ; and I must confess that I was received by all the officers with so much honour and such a show of satisfaction that nothing could be added to it. . . . I hope to see the Chancellor to-morrow ; and then two or three days will be spent in receiving the visits of the foreign ministers accredited here ; and then I will return their visits.’² And then near two weeks having been taken up by the ceremonies consequent upon the sham landing at Greenwich—three months after the real landing had taken place at Dover—the course of ordinary life will at length be resumed.

Cominges’s account of the entrée was found very satisfactory, and he received the congratulations of his master, who, however, not without a tinge of naïveté, expressed his regret “that the people who flocked there in such large numbers were drawn more by curiosity than by love.”³

The importance of such matters being very great, no envoy reached England without his being carefully described to Louis ; his dress and equipage, his coach, attendants, servants, the manner of his landing being of course included in the picture. We sometimes hear of a Spanish or a Danish coach being clumsily built or insufficiently gilt, or of a Tuscan envoy who “looks quite abashed, being entirely unused to the part he has to play. . . . Never was seen on the back of a merchant, of the Rue aux Fers, on his marriage day, a coat of such

¹ *The King of course means Louis.*

² *To Lionne. April 19, 1663.*

³ *The King to Cominges. April 29, 1663.*

glowing and puffing-out stuff; with his ill-drawn woollen hose, a large flat collar, and huge white feathers." ¹

II. *At my Lord Mayor's.*

When any breach of etiquette had been committed, it is needless to say, after what had happened to d'Estrades, that Cominges was not slow to resent it. On the [9th of November] 1663, Mr. Pepys happened to dine with the Lord Mayor, for it was his luck to be usually present when anything memorable was going to take place. "They had," he says, "ten good dishes to a messe, with plenty of wine of all sorts;" but "it was very displeasing that we had no napkins, nor change of trenchers, and drank out of earthen pitchers and wooden dishes. It happened that after the lords had half dined, came the French Ambassador up to the lords' table, where he was to have sat; he would not sit down nor dine with the Lord Mayor, who was not yet come, nor have a table to himself, which was offered; but in a discontent went away again. After I had dined . . . I went up to the ladys' room, and there stayed gazing upon them." While Mr. Pepys was enjoying this last amusement, Cominges was writing to Louis Quatorze and describing how, though he had arrived at the appointed hour, people had sat at table before his coming; and how, having been instructed on a former occasion not to show too much of his temper, he had done all he could to prevent or at least extenuate this "incivilité grossière et barbare."

¹ To Lionne. October 6, 1663.

At first, things had gone on very well : “ The Master of the Ceremonies had taken care to come and fetch me at eight o’clock in order that I might see the beginning of the show that takes place on the water. He then led me to the main street, where a room had been prepared for me to see conveniently the cavalcade. No sooner had it gone by than I stepped into a coach, and, availing myself of the by-streets, I got the start of the others. I arrived half an hour before the mayor and was received at the Guildhall with as much courtesy as possible ; the gate was opened for my coaches ; the pike and flag were lowered to me by the officers present when I alighted. I was there and then received by other burgesses, who placed me under the conduct of others, and so on, till I reached the banquetting place, where I found ‘ M. le Chancelier ’ and the members of the Council already seated at table.

“ I was surprised at this piece of gross incivility. To avoid, however, giving importance to it, I took upon myself to arrange so as to either allow these gentlemen to retrieve their fault if they had done it out of ignorance or oversight, or to escape the effect of their ill-will through the boldness and openness of my attitude. I therefore walked straight to them with the intent of complimenting them upon their good appetite ; but they stood so cold and dumbfounded that I thought fit to retire—the Chancellor and all the persons present having not even risen to receive me, except Bennet, who spoke some words to which I answered with scorn.”¹

The matter was very grave indeed ; there could scarcely be any doubt as to that. The municipal

¹ To the King. November 9, 1663.

officers hastened to present the excuses of the Mayor ; then Lord St. Albans came to the Embassy ; then the Abbé de Montagu ; then the Lord Mayor himself drove in state to explain matters. "On the next day, at eleven, I was informed that the Mayor had started to pay me a visit. He arrived shortly after, followed by ten or twelve coaches and a rather large number of people, who accompanied the procession out of curiosity. He walked into my house with his insignia, that is, the sword [&c., &c.]. He stopped a moment in the lower hall, expecting, perhaps, I would go and receive him there ; but one of my secretaries went to tell him that there was a fire upstairs, and that I was not ready dressed yet, having spent the morning in writing my dispatches. He then walked up, and I at once went to him to conduct him to my audience chamber. I would not hear him before he was seated. He at first explained that he was sorry he could not express himself in French, but that he had an interpreter with him."

My lord then begs to be excused for what had taken place, and asks Cominges to come again and dine with him. The Ambassador had some trouble in understanding this, because the interpreter "did not fulfil his duty very well" ; he requested the town provost, whose French was better, to translate his own harangue, which was to the effect that he would, with the assent of his master, entirely forget the indignity he had suffered, and would willingly dine with his lordship, provided the same company were present ; which being agreed to, the Mayor rose to go. "I accompanied him to his coach, making him always to go first, but I

myself keeping on the right hand. All went off satisfactorily on both sides.”¹

To the great dismay of Cominges, the King at first answered nothing ; two “ ordinaires ” came and went, and no instructions reached him. He thought he had not done enough, and supposed he might have incurred no measured blame for having not exacted more, perhaps for not having left the country ; he felt the pangs of the deepest anxiety, and wrote expostulatory letters to Lionne. At length a Royal dispatch of immense magnitude, such as questions of this sort would elicit in those times, reached him and quieted his fears. It showed him one important thing, viz., that his master was too much of a statesman to stand ever and always by etiquette, whatever were the case and circumstances. The drift of the Royal message was to pacify Cominges himself, to show that the intention to offer him an insult was perhaps, after all, an imaginary grievance, and to draw in such matters a distinction which has not lost its wisdom : when there is no intention to wound, and especially when the sovereign of the country has had no part in the affair, it may very easily be passed over. “ I have more than once stated,” says Louis, “ in the matter of the difficulties I have with the Court of Rome (*i.e.*, the attack of the Papal guard upon Créqui, the French Ambassador), that it is not in the power of kings and potentates to prevent unpleasantnesses arising out of fortuitous circumstances which all human foresight is inadequate to prevent.” The d’Estrades affair was grave only on account of the interference of the British King, from which it mani-

¹ November 12, 1663.

festly appeared that his brother of France had no such rights of precedence as he claimed. The Lord Mayor business is of a different sort, and must not be made too much of.¹

Cominges became, therefore, less exacting ; he went the next year to the Guildhall banquet, where this time everybody took their seat at table at the appointed hour, about which there was no mistake, and a great many compliments passed between him and "Messieurs de la Ville," "Messieurs du Conseil," and the Lord Mayor.

It would be unfair to Cominges not to state that his English colleague made himself scarcely less troublesome in Paris. The Presbyterian Holles, created a peer at the Restoration, "a man," says Burnet, "of great courage, but of as great pride," began to show his temper even before he arrived ; he wanted Louis to call him "my lord" in his passport, and a correspondence took place on the subject, the French King declaring that he would call the English envoy "the Sieur," that is, Seigneur (or lord), as much as he pleased, but not "*my* lord," because "my lord, properly speaking, means Monseigneur, and it cannot be believed that Holles expects that such a title will be allowed him in an act signed by the King himself."² His entrée was another source of difficulties, and was not more easily arranged than Cominges's own. When at last established in Paris, he wanted to be addressed as "Your Excellency" by the Secretaries of State, but not to have to return the compliment. De Lionne, who

¹ The King to Cominges. November 18, 1663.

² Lionne to Cominges. February 25, 1663.

had long given him the desired appellation,¹ ceased, seeing that he was not answered in the same way. The same thing happened with Chancelier Séguier. On the request of Lord Holles it had been agreed they would call each other "Your Excellency," and "M. le Chancelier having begun, the other answered him with a 'You,' at which he was excessively shocked. In the meantime all is stopped, which gives me the deepest sorrow, finding it a great pity that for things of this sort we have come to a standstill."²

While Cominges did not know how to speak English, Holles's French was not of the best sort, and the mistakes of the grave Presbyterian were a source of amusement at the English Court. He writes once that the French Queen has given birth to a Moorish girl, which creates great wonder. The wonder is altered into laughter when it is ascertained that having heard that Marie Thérèse had been delivered of a "fille morte," Holles had misunderstood it for a "fille maure."³

He, too, was not without his quarrels in the street for precedence. Going one day to pay a visit to Lady Holland, then in Paris, he meets the coach of the Marquis de Besnac, "who must be some young man, as he is not yet known to his Majesty." The two drivers quarrel; Holles takes part for his own, "le bâton à la main," and Besnac, who did not know whom

¹ At the request of Abbé de Montagu. Montagu to Lionne. August 24, 1664.

² So writes Madame, Duchess of Orléans, to her brother, Charles II., June 22, 1664. "Henriette d'Angleterre," by the Comte de Baillon, Paris, 1886, p. 155.

³ Cominges to Lionne. December 1, 1664.

he was addressing, uses some disrespectful language ; upon which Louis sends him to the Bastille, and his servants to Fort l'Evêque.¹ They were subsequently released with the assent of Holles.

Another time, as he was going to the Louvre, and his coach was following Madame's, his horses were suddenly stopped and beaten back by the servants of the Princesse de Carignan. These were very numerous, and armed with big sticks. Holles had but five or six men, "who, having only in their hand some little rod," were utterly routed ; and then, insult being added to injury, the Carignan lackeys made bold to declare "that there were twelve coaches in France with a right of precedence over Ambassadors', theirs being one." Excuses have been offered, but more is wanted ; and so on.²

III. *Cominges at Home.*

"When any person is sent abroad as an ambassador, his first duty is to secure for himself a commodious place of abode, worthy of the grandeur of the master he serves." So read the instructions supplied to d'Estrades when he left for London. This first duty was satisfactorily fulfilled by Cominges (d'Estrades had been living in Chelsea), who established himself in Exeter House, in the Strand. This fine brick palace, with four square turrets, had been erected, in the Elizabethan style

¹ From Lionne. June 3, 1665.

² Holles to Lionne, undated, but of the year 1665, last document in vol. lxxxiv. of the "Correspondance d'Angleterre" at the French Foreign Office.

of architecture, by Burleigh, as great a builder as statesman, to whom his posterity—and posterity at large—owe Burghley House, Northamptonshire. His palace in the Strand stood behind Somerset House, where the Queen-mother lived, its existence being recalled by the Exeter Street of to-day. It was first called Burleigh House, and it took afterwards, from his son, the name of Exeter House. No better site could be chosen for an Embassy ; it was near Whitehall, and not far from the water, which was then as much used as a means of communication as the Grand Canal at Venice. Boatmen were constituted into an influential corporation. We find them in 1665 able to prevent a bridge being built opposite Whitehall, as being injurious to their interests. “The King declared that he would never allow the bridge to be built so long as he lives.”¹ Upon which there was much rejoicing among the boatmen, and much appropriate shouting, we doubt not, of “Long live the King !” While most of the Embassies have now retreated behind or round Buckingham Palace, they clustered then round Whitehall ; Watteville’s York House was in that quarter, and stood between Durham House and the Royal palace.

In this magnificent place of abode, besides the small dinners to his literary friends, Cominges gave larger entertainments, where the King, the Court beauties, the Hamiltons and Gramonts, Members of Parliament, people in fashion used to meet. “My house will be open to-morrow. . . . The King and the Duke of York do me the honour to dine here. Not that I have asked his Majesty, but he would come and be one of a

¹ To the King. September 1, 1664.

party which will include the most illustrious libertines of his kingdom. I wish you were here too, were it only for two hours, to give me after the fête your good advice and a hugging, which would please me in proportion with the esteem and affection I feel for you.”¹

By means of such fêtes Cominges hopes to dispel the ill feelings which certain false news have created: “The King is going to sup here to-day with his principal courtiers. The ladies come too, and I will regale them with violins and music and other amusements in use in this country. The strange informations received here from Paris have put me to the necessity of giving this feast, to show it is not true any disdain is felt for them, and to warm them somewhat towards us by honest and allowable means. You will pardon me if I leave you to go and see that everything is made ready.”² Through his dinners Cominges hoped also to get some intercourse with Members of Parliament, and to be initiated by them into the mysteries of English politics. “Parliament will soon meet; the lords begin to congregate, and to come from the provinces. . . . I hope that during the Session some members will be induced to accept my invitations, and I will turn their acquaintance into account by eliciting from them information as to their country, manners, and laws.”³

In these praiseworthy efforts Cominges was helped for a while by his wife. The “belle Cominges,” whom he had at first left behind, at length crossed the Channel and made her appearance into London society. On the

¹ To Lionne. February 15, 1663.

² To Lionne. September 22, 1664.

³ To the King. February 19, 1663.

18th of August, 1664, her husband reports that she is paying her first visits. "The King, the Queens, the Duke and Duchess, have caused her to be visited on their behalf, the day of her arrival; and since then the King, the Duke, and the best people at Court have done her the honour to come and see her. I assure you she will not shame our nation. I reprimanded her somewhat on the score of expense, in order that she does not continue to overstep due bounds in this. For this time, however, I was not sorry for what she had done, rather very much the reverse. The King will pay for all when he likes."¹

The only pity is that she is not very strong, and Cominges sorrowfully informs his friend the Secretary of State that the beautiful Césonie, the Philis and Iris of so many poets, suffers from the most unpoetical disease. "She nearly died yesterday, 'd'une colique la plus violente du monde,' as was apparent from the faintings and contortions it caused. To-day she is better. Having, however, to stay with her in order to see that she is properly nursed, I have little time to write to you." She has luckily got the better of the absurd malady, and she goes about again, taking great care to do honour to her country. She is every day *en fête*. "Yesternight Madame de Castlemaine treated her in the most magnificent manner, and the King did the honours of the house in a way befitting more a host than a guest."²

Winter comes, and she resolves to go home. Charles gives her a diamond; she makes everything ready,

¹ To Lionne. August 18, 1664.

² To Lionne. September 1 and 15, 1664.

packs her things and sends them away, gets her passport and a pass for her horses.¹ But in those pre-steamboat and railway times, the journey was not to be performed as it is now, at will. Travellers were dependent for their starting upon the weather. When everything is arranged she hears that on account of the ice all traffic has been stopped. She has therefore to stay and be very uncomfortable. "For a fortnight she has had no clothing but what she had kept to meet her journey." A few days later we are informed that the supply being apparently exhausted, "she has had to keep her room for want of apparel."² Luckily a thaw has at last set in, and she is able to go and adorn St. Germain again with her presence.

IV. *Court News.*

Fond of business as he was, Louis was too addicted to pleasure not to enjoy tales and reports of the curious occurrences happening among the fair ladies and bold courtiers of his "brother's" court. We have seen him remind Cominges not to fail to report the most curious news of this sort ; and in this the old diplomatist and soldier did not fail. Many of the fly-leaves he used to enclose in his parcels for the amusement of his master appear to have been lost, but some remain, and in several cases the official dispatches themselves supply

¹ December 28, 1664. "Pass for the Countess of Cominges to return to France, and another for two horses free of custom for the service of the Count her husband." "Calendar of State Papers—Domestic Series," years 1664–5.

² To Lionne. January 19 and 29, 1665.

the want. For there was only a *nuance* then between court news and political news, and we constantly find the one mixed up with the other. The former had greater importance than now, and ambassadors reported them the more freely as they were not restrained by the thought of impending blue-books.

Cominges' statements do not contradict but rather confirm the impression one gathers in reading Gramont and Pepys. We see, appearing in his pages one by one, the names of Mlle. Stewart, Mlle. de Hamilton, Madame Middleton, and the other famous names to be seen to-day written under the portraits at Hampton Court. The painter, the ambassador, the diarist, all agree.

Cominges has numerous descriptions of Charles, in all of which the English sovereign appears, as was his wont, as a good-humoured prince, hating business and trouble, passionately fond of ease and amusement, greatly enjoying his dance, his walk, his ride, and all bodily exercises ; sad to death when the Queen is in danger, happy as an angel when the Castlemaine smiles. There are pictures of his going, in company with the Queen, to see the ships put out of the Chatham dockyards, and "taking off his wig and *pourpoint* to be more at his ease, by reason of the extreme heat of the sun,"¹ with the consequence that he caught a very bad cold and had to be bled. There are descriptions of his beginning the day in tears with his dying Queen and ending it in laughter with the Castlemaine and the Stewart :

"I am just come from Whitehall, where I have left

¹ July 17, 1664.

the Queen in such a state that, according to physicians, little room is left for hope. She has received the extreme unction this morning." She has, moreover, made her last recommendations to the King, asking him to have her body sent back to Portugal, and not to desert the cause of the little kingdom then hard pressed by Spain. "The Portuguese are excessively unpopular here, and their ambassador himself is not secure from aspersions. They are accused, and he especially, of having contributed by their bad management to the death of the Queen, as they were the reason of her spending two nights without sleep, one night being devoted to the drawing up of her will and the other to a leave-taking of all her servants. 'Tis true that, to please her, she was left two or three days in their hands; but the King, having perceived that they increased her illness and went even the length of having her take a number of remedies of their country, has put a stop to those doings.

"Though she has some little respite from time to time, I despair of her recovery. . . . The King seems to me deeply affected. Well! he supped none the less yesterday with Madame de Castlemaine and had his usual talk with Mlle. Stewart, of whom he is excessively fond. There is already a talk of his marrying again, and everybody gives him a new wife according to his own inclination; and there are some who do not look beyond England to find one for him."¹ But Catherine of Braganza took care to set all these plans to naught; cured of her physicians, thanks to her husband's kindness, she recovered; there were great rejoicings, none

¹ To the King. November 1, 1663.

being more sincere, the ambassador wickedly observes, than the Duke of York's and his wife's.

At that time, there was no doubt the Queen would remain barren. All that was possible had been tried, remedies, and the waters; but all had failed. In 1663 she had been to Tunbridge, and then to Bath. "Parliament is about to be prorogued, to the satisfaction of everybody. As soon as it is done, the King will go to Plymouth, and then will join the Queen to the waters. She is now physicking herself as a preparation for the waters, and in the hope it will facilitate the result she intends, and for which she goes there." ¹ The journey takes place, and the town becomes empty: "One of the greatest towns in the world is now turned into a solitude. Neither ladies nor courtiers are to be seen there; the gentlemen have moved away, and without any compassion for those who stay, have taken their wives with them.

"The Queen, with her rather numerous court, is still at Tunbridge, where the waters have done nothing of what was expected. Well may they be called '*les eaux de scandale*,' for they nearly ruined the good name of the maids and of the ladies (those I mean who were there without their husbands). It took them a whole month, and for some more than that, to clear themselves and save their honour; and it is even reported that a few of them are not quite out of trouble yet. For which cause the Court will come back in a week; one of the ladies of the Queen stays behind and will pay for the others.

"A few days will be spent here, to gather strength,

¹ To the King. July 5, 1663.

and then a new journey will be undertaken, towards the Baths, eight miles distant from here. Nothing will be left unattempted to give a heir to the British crown.”¹ The Queen, after all this physic, feeling very sick, her doctors go about whispering the great news, but to their shame it turns out that the symptoms are only due to the quality of the waters that are “vitriolées.”

While Catherine of Braganza takes the waters, Charles follows his usual course with the Castlemaine and the others. The star of the Stewart is rising : “There was a great row the other day among the ladies ; it was carried so far that the King threatened the lady at whose apartments he sups every evening that he would never set foot there again if he did not find the ‘Demoiselle’ with her ; and for this cause the lady is never without her.”² Miss Stewart “did not partake of the communion at Whitsuntide,” which is a great mark of her sins, the Catholics contend. But, for all that, she is “one of the most beautiful girls and one of the most modest to be seen.”³

The King, however, who does not like to displease any one, when he can avoid it without displeasing himself, does not give up the Castlemaine ; far from it ; and he feels greatly offended when anything unpleasant happens to the fair creature. Very unpleasant things sometimes happened. We see her one night going home after having spent the evening at St. James’s Palace with “Madame la Duchesse,” and followed only,

¹ Cominges’ Sheet of Court News. August, 1663.

² To the King. July 5, 1663.

³ Marquis de Ruigny (staying in London with a temporary mission) to the King. June 25, 1663.





W. LLOYD GILGARDIN

J. M. P. WITTMANN PARIS

*Barbara Duchess of Cleveland
and Countess of Castlemaine
from the portrait engraved by Sherwin*

as an escort, by a maid and a little page. The party are met suddenly "by three noblemen (so at least they seemed from their garments) who wore masks and addressed to her the harshest and bitterest reprimand that can well be imagined. They even went so far as to remind her that the mistress of Edward the Fourth died on a dunghill, scorned and abandoned by everybody. You can well imagine that the time seemed long to her, for the park extends over a larger space than from Regnard's to the Pavilion. As soon as she was in her bedroom she fainted. The King being informed of this ran to her, caused all the gates to be shut and all the people found in the park to be arrested. Seven or eight persons who happened thus to be caught were brought in, but could not be identified. They have told the tale; it was wished to hush up the affair, but I believe the secret will not easily be kept." ¹

The chain of the Whitehall amusements was as follows: "There is a ball and a comedy every other day; the rest of the days are spent at play, either at the Queen's or at the Lady Castlemaine's, where the company does not fail to be treated to a good supper. In this way, Sire, is the time occupied in this country. The impending Parliamentary session will soon turn the thoughts to other objects; the cleverest have already begun their canvassing, and the others wait for the occasion to display their talents in this so illustrious assembly." ²

Ships came from the far-off countries of the sun, and after a year's journey round the Cape brought news for

¹ To Lionne. Oct. 2, 1664.

² To the King. January 25, 1663.

the statesmen, goods for the merchants, presents for the King, and trinkets for the ladies. Much noise was made concerning gifts from India sent to Charles, and said to be peerless. "But the King did me the honour to show them, and laugh over them with me. They are enclosed in a little purse of purple satin. There is a yellow stone twice as big as the Sancy, of such a good shape as to be worth a million ; it would, however, be purchased dear for a crown. There is another stone, a red one, called a carbuncle, which looks rather fine ; but I have seen many such on reliquaries, from which I doubt they be of great value. There is also a white and blue sapphire, excellent to adorn a bishop's ring, and a very large pearl which the King gave to the Queen ; nature had meant to make it round and white, but failed." ¹

When the Court goes to the waters, the Whitehall amusements follow in its wake ; not so when the Universities are the goal of the journey. Divertissements are doubtless provided, but of a less attractive sort, and Charles has to take part in festivities concerning which Cominges, lover as he was of the ancients, writes : ² "The Court is not returned yet from its 'progrès,' to adopt the word in use here. They will reach Oxford to-day, and stay four days there to enjoy such amusements as a University can provide.

. . . There is a talk of a variety of plays and of a number of harangues, panegyrics, and epithalamies ; Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Arabic, and Syrian being the best

¹ To the King. August 18, 1664.

² To the King. Oct. 16, 1667.

known among the languages resorted to. I doubt not that, after these dull entertainments, they will return with pleasure to more amusing ones at Whitehall."

As for Gramont, Cominges describes him as taking in all these festivities the very same part allotted to him by his brother-in-law Hamilton. The chevalier had reached London nearly at the same time as the Ambassador, and "had been received as kindly as possible. He makes one in all the parties of the King, and has his say at Madame de Castlemaine's." He takes the part of that lady against Madame Jaret, who revenges herself by certain ill-reports she spreads in society, not sparing the King himself. The King, in his turn, does not spare "that madcap of a Jaret; it is even whispered that the English word he used means something more." Nothing daunted by this or by anything, Gramont "follows his usual style of life. He sees the ladies at the lawful hours, and a little also at the forbidden ones. . . . The King constantly asks him to his entertainments." A few months later we find him true to himself, "and continuing his gallantries as is his wont—that is making much noise and little progress." He has just managed to have a very ridiculous affair with Madame Middleton, whose maid he bribed, but the maid kept to herself both the money and the love declarations of the chevalier. When at length the lady heard of what was meant for her, as it was not conveyed, it seems, with all the eloquence Gramont had meant, she was nothing moved, but ordered him to keep quiet and look elsewhere.

Gramont did not fail to take her at her word, and he is now, six months after his coming, in a fair way to

marriage. This creates quite a sensation, and the *pros* and *cons* are discussed at great length in the gilt halls of the royal palace and in the ambassadorial dispatches. Few marriages (except perhaps Panurge's own) have been the cause of more discussions, and have elicited a larger variety of opinions. Cominges was against it.

"The Chevalier de Gramont is so well pleased with all the advantages accruing to him from his gallantries that he means to build upon them what of his life he has still to spend. But as he has noticed indeed that his age is becoming a great obstacle to all his imaginary pleasures, he has resolved to secure for himself more solid ones by marrying. With this view he has cast his eyes on a beautiful young demoiselle of the house of Hamilton, niece to the Duke of Ormond, adorned with all the grace of virtue and nobility, but so little with mere material wealth that, according to those who give her most, she has none.

"I think that at first the chevalier did not mean to go so far in this business, but, be it that conversation has completed what beauty began, or that the noise made by two rather troublesome brothers may have had something to do with it, certain it is that he has now declared himself publicly. The King has given his consent, and in consideration of the intended marriage has given hopes of his providing for the board of the lovers by means of some pension or other when he can.

"As I saw that this marriage was the cause of endless banter at Court, and that everybody talked of it according to his humour, I took upon myself to try and break it, or at least postpone it, but all without





117100 B. VARDIN

117100 B. VARDIN

*Elizabeth Hamilton
Countess of Gramont.
from the picture by Lely*

success. I see now no remedy to an unavoidable evil, recommended by a blind and performed by a disabled man. He loaded me with a thousand false reasons, which I would not entertain ; he received mine in the same way ; and time will teach him which are the best. I wish for his sake it may be his, but it does not seem likely.”¹

The marriage being resolved, is publicly announced, on the same day as the conversion of Madame de Castlemaine. “The King has been asked by the relations of the lady to interfere and prevent her ; but he answered that, as for the soul of the ladies, he did not meddle with that.”²

The nuptial ceremonies take place, and Gramont greatly enjoys the thought of some day carrying his “belle Anglaise” to France. His happiness is increased when, the following year, he becomes the father of a son as “beautiful as the mother.” All the Court has rejoiced with him, and “he looks much the younger for the event ; but I think the hope he entertains of soon going back to France has had something to do with the wiping away of the wrinkles about his eyes and forehead, and the recalling of the roses and lilies.”³ His temper and character are unfortunately exactly what they were before. Having signed one of his dispatches, the body of which is written by his secretary, Cominges adds in the margin with his own hand : “M. le Chevalier de Gramont has come back two months ago. He has not altered since he married,

¹ Cominges’ sheet of Court News, for the King. August, 1663.

² To Lionne. December 31, 1663.

³ To Lionne. September 8, 1664.

except in his having become such a downright liar as to stand matchless in the world.”¹

Heroes of a different stamp also make their appearance in the fly-leaves of Court news supplied to Louis by his Ambassador, but they too do not always appear there at their best. Noticeable among them is the soldier usually called simply “le Général.” Monk attracts the attention of Cominges by the unparalleled splendour of his drinking capacities. In one of his dispatches the Ambassador describes a little fashionable fête, the style of which looks now very old-fashioned indeed. “An amusing affair happened last week in this Court. The Earl of Oxford, one of the first noblemen of England, Knight of the Garter and an officer of the Horse Guards, asked to dinner General Monk, the High Chamberlain of the Kingdom, and some few other Councillors of State. They were joined by a number of young men of quality. The entertainment rose to such a pitch that every person happened to become a party to quarrels, both as offended and offender; they came to blows and tore each other’s hair; two of them drew their swords, which luckily had a cooling effect on the company. Each then went away according as he pleased. Those who followed the General wanted some more drink, and it was given them. They continued there till evening, and therefore wanted food. Having been warmed by their morning and after-dinner doings each resolved to see his companion

¹ To Lionne. January 28, 1664. Gramont had left for France with his wife, shortly after the birth of his son, which had taken place on September 7, 1664. He started on his journey on November 3.

a-ground. The General, who is obviously endowed with a strong head, struck a master stroke ; he presented to each a goblet of the deepest. Some swallowed the contents, and some not ; but all peaceably remained where they were till the following morning, without speaking to each other, though in the same room. Only the General went to Parliament as usual, with his mind and thoughts nothing impaired.

“ There was much laughter at this.” ¹

¹ To the King. May 28, 1663.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LIBERTIES OF ENGLAND.

FOREMOST among the curiosities of the land which attract the notice of the Ambassador is that strange assembly whither Monk, as we have just seen, repaired after his drinking bout, the Parliament. The importance of this institution was well known in France, where its working was the cause of unceasing wonder. When d'Estrades was sent to England, the instructions he was provided with drew his attention to the Westminster assembly, and to its democratic tendencies. The Royal dispatch supplied him, on the subject of the English nation and its representatives, with the following important particulars :—

“ His Majesty thinks it proper to inform the said Sieur d'Estrades that the English Monarchy is made up of three kingdoms, the inhabitants of which vary in their tempers and inclinations. In one only thing they agree, namely, in working with strenuous care to reduce the Royal authority, and to place it under the dependence of their Parliaments ; which Parliaments are the States-general of each kingdom, and not a body of magistrates as here.”

Great attention was in consequence paid to the doings of this extraordinary congregation, and the French foreign office archives abound with accounts of its sittings. The opening ceremony is several times described—once, for example, by Secretary Batailler, in charge of the Embassy when d'Estrades had had to leave :—

“The King of England performed yesterday the opening of Parliament in the Upper House. He was adorned with the Royal cloak, and wore his crown ; he was surrounded by his great officers of State ; he took his seat ; the lords and bishops did the same, and then he ordered the members of the Lower House to be called. They rushed tumultuously (*‘tumultuairement’*) into the Upper House, as the mob does in the hall of audience at the Paris Parliament, when the ushers have called. They remained on the other side of a barrier which closes the pit where the lords sit, their speaker standing in the middle. The King of England then began his harangue,” which is here summarized. “This harangue, as I have said, lasted nearly a quarter of an hour, and was very well delivered by the King, near whom I happened to be, and was translated to me by ‘*Milord Beleze*’ [Bellasis]. One thing I did not like : he had it all ready written in his hand, and very often looked at his paper, almost as if he had read it. I was informed that such was the custom in England, the reason being that the King may not expose himself to the laughter of the people by stopping short through loss of memory. Preachers in the pulpit do the same. If the Chancellor, whom his gout prevented from being present, had been able to

perform his duty, the King would have been prompted by him from behind.”¹

It will be noticed that if not all of the precedents thus commemorated by Secretary of Embassy Batailler, have been preserved to the present day, one at least has been faithfully adhered to, and the rushing “tumultuairement” of the members of the one House to the bar of the other has lost nothing in our days of its pristine vigour and *entrain*.

All the explanations and descriptions Cominges had received before his journey did not prevent him from being deeply astonished at what he saw when he reached England. The working of the institutions and the management of parties were so extraordinary to the mind of a subject of the Sun-King, that he could scarcely believe his eyes. “If Aristotle, who attempted to define even the smallest things pertaining to politics, were to come again to this world, he could not find words to explain the manner of this Government. It has a monarchical appearance, as there is a King, but at bottom it is very far from being a Monarchy. . . . Whether this is caused by the fundamental laws of the kingdom, or by the carelessness of the King, herein lies the difficulty. . . . It is true that the disposition of the laws of the country has limited in such a way the power both of the King and his subjects that they seem to be joined by indissoluble ties, in such a manner that if one of the two parties were wanting, the other would go to ruin.”²

This by no means unwise view of the English Con

¹ To Lionne (?). December 1, 1661.

² To the King. February 4, 1664.

stitution applies, Cominges thinks, to things as they should be. As they are, the working of the institutions is impeded by the abhorrence Charles feels for business and trouble. His very Court "is divided into four or five parties ('cabales'). The King, who ought to be able to fuse them all into one, is at the head of the weakest." Some of the virtues he is endowed with would better fit a private person than a King, for "all the virtues of private individuals are not Royal ones."¹ Women play too important a part, "so that it can be said with truth that the English are slaves to their wives and mistresses."²

The Ambassador had not been a month at his post when he set resolutely to work, and began, with the help of books and friends and personal observation, to draw up a report in which he tried to unravel the mysteries of those same Parliamentary institutions which were fit to puzzle Aristotle himself. At that news young Louis was "greatly pleased," and Lionne "wanted words to say how delighted he was at the thought" of receiving trustworthy information on such a subject ;³ and Louis again dictated a dispatch to the effect that he was anxious to receive the memoir, "not doubting it would be a very curious piece of work."

At the beginning of April the report was ready, and Cominges sent it, not without apology for "the mistakes that may be in it ; the cleverest would have made some in such an obscure matter." Louis has scarcely got

¹ To the King. January, 1663.

² To the King. February 4, 1664.

³ February 28, 1663.

the precious document in his hands, when, even before reading it, he wants to acknowledge its receipt, and to express his pleasure : " I shall greatly enjoy reading it ; I mean to draw from it ideas that shall remain in my mind for my better instruction on a matter of such deep importance, a matter with which one has to deal every day." And it must not be believed that the cause of his haste was the same as with us the busy men of to-day, who " will not wait " till we have read, to thank for a book, fearing there might be long waiting. On the *same* day Lionne was able to write :—

" Since the King has signed the letter he sends to you, his Majesty has had time to hear read, with the greatest attention, from beginning to end, the fine work you have forwarded to him concerning the Parliaments of England. I had always thought you, sir, a well-informed and clever cavalier ; but I must beg your pardon for the wrong I long did you, in not thinking you equal to such a task. Anything better written, wiser, and more curiously worked out I never saw."

As is often the case with reports which attract particular attention, the King kept it by him, or Lionne, or somebody else. Certain it is that it is not at its place in the archives, and the search I instituted there was frustrated. It happened luckily that Cominges had caused a copy of his memoir to be made for his predecessor and friend d'Estrades, and had it forwarded to him at the Hague. D'Estrades left it among his papers, and the text is to be found in a MS. now preserved in the public library at Toulouse.¹

¹ MS. 526. I owe the finding of Cominges's report there to M. Abel Lefranc, of the " Archives Nationales."

It gives a fair account of the summoning of Parliaments, the proceedings of the two Houses, their powers, the privileges of the members, and the part allotted to the King, the way in which votes are taken, the order of precedence of the various classes of members of both Houses, &c., &c. It is obviously the result of much reading and much consulting, Cominges not being afraid of plunging, when need be, into the mist of antiquity, and bringing back from his tenebrous expedition the queer information that was then available. He informs us, for example, that the word "Parliament" means "*loqui ex mente* ; for it is a privileged place for members of both Houses freely to speak their mind there, were it against the King himself." The origin of the institution is wrapt in mystery ; some find it among the old Britons and Saxons and Danes ; to the exertions of these last, learned people attribute "the famous relic called Stonehenge on Salisbury Plain," which is, according to these savants, the earliest House of Parliament built in England. Daniel the prophet, the Medes and Persians, William the Conqueror, each in their turn are called to bring their more or less unexpected testimony. But more noticeable than all this is the general tone of reverence with which Cominges speaks of the institution itself and of this body which, according to him, can well be called "*auguste*."

Thus provided with a safeguard for its liberties, the nation and its members of whatever class offered a sight unique in Europe. By degrees only the working of the machinery came to be understood, and continental statesmen ceased to pity a King so dependent upon the goodwill of his people, and a nation so utterly deprived of a sole and absolute guide.

"Poor Prince!" exclaims Choisy in his "*Mémoires*," thinking of the English sovereign, "who did not remember that the thirty thousand men of his army were Englishmen, ready to leave him as soon as he attempted anything against their liberties. I well remember having heard Savile, Envoy Extraordinary of the English King to France, a man loaded with his master's favours, say that he would be the first to take up arms against him if he were to exceed his lawful power and to attack, were it ever so little, the laws of the kingdom."¹

The personal liberty enjoyed by citizens in a town unprovided with a Bastille was again for the Ambassador a cause of endless wonder. Think of a Parliament "the members of which are not only allowed to speak their mind freely, but also to do a number of surprising, extraordinary things, and even to call the highest people ('les plus qualifiés') to the bar!" Think of an Earl of Bristol remaining free in the town, when he has accused the Lord Chancellor of high treason!

Bristol had first begun by going, though a peer, to the Lower House, to make a speech against the Ministers. At this the House had been very pleased; but not so the King. Charles begged to see the harangue; Bristol refused, then consented, and the King having expressed his opinion that the speech was a seditious one, was sharply answered by the Earl. Charles "rather smoothly retorted that he would be a poor King indeed if he were not able to quiet an Earl of Bristol. May God spare your Majesty such subjects and such a lack of power! The King of England will wait till the

¹ "*Mémoires*," Lescure's edition, i. p. 209.

end of the session, that is, about a fortnight, to notify his will to the Earl of Bristol; it will be probably nothing more than an order not to appear at Court.”¹

Not at all “quieted” by his master, Bristol, a few days later, did the deed he had contemplated from the first, and launched in the House of Lords his charge against Clarendon. “Nothing can be more astonishing and extraordinary,” writes Cominges, utterly bewildered, “than what I have to inform your Majesty of, and you will be not a little surprised when you see that, to find precedents for it, you must go back in your mind to the times that saw the violence of Sylla, the outbursts of the Gracchi, and the accusation of Cæsar (then a private citizen) against Dolabella, who was endowed at that time with the highest magistrature.” Bristol was till now merely “a presumptuous fool, blinded by his vanity”; but he has become “a mad dog and bites all round.”

The sitting opened with a speech from the Duke of York, who declared that his brother entirely disapproved of the doings of Bristol. The Earl none the less made his harangue against Clarendon, feeling bound to do it, as he said, by the interest of the State. He is in despair to thus incur the displeasure of the King, but having had no choice, “he is ready to give up his life at the behest of his master, and to hold out his ‘estomac’ to the sword of M. le Duc d’York.” He goes on speaking at random in a scarcely intelligible fashion, and tries to make the Lower House interfere. The Chancellor on his part manages so as to have the accusation referred to the ordinary judges: these men being all of them “in

¹ To the King. July 16, 1663.

his own appointment." A very natural move, says Cominges, but all the rest is very strange. "Here we have a regular suit between a private person and the Chancellor, this last having his high rank, his past services, the goodwill of the King, of the Queen-mother, of the Duke of York (whose wife gave birth yesterday to a son), and of all the Court, to boast of; but the other walks about town as if nothing were the matter, and does not in the least give up hope of success. I confess to your Majesty that I am at my wits' end (*je perds la tramontane*), and that it seems to me as if I were transported beyond the sphere of the moon."¹

So extraordinary is the case that Cominges recurs to it in his private letters with fresh exclamations, and, addressing de Lionne, writes again: "You will see in my dispatch to his Majesty how the clouds which rose in the evening gave birth on the Friday to storms and thunderbolts. I must confess that nothing in the world is more surprising than what is to be seen in this Court, and less easily intelligible to a man who has been brought up under a different Government and different laws. It seems to me, every moment, I have been transferred to the antipodes, when I see a private gentleman walking the streets, sitting as a judge in Parliament, receiving the visits of his political friends, and leading no less pleasant a life than usual, when he has accused of capital crimes the first officer of the State, a dignitary on the best terms with his master, supported by the Queen-mother, and father-in-law to the heir of the crown."²

¹ To the King. July 23, 1663.

² July 23, 1663. Clarendon himself is greatly dismayed, and he fears he may lose what consideration he enjoyed abroad.

To which Lionne answers, with a great appearance of truth: "If anybody had attacked here M. le Chancelier au Parlement, you may readily believe that he would not be seen at play every day on the bowling-green, and that there would be no great competition to marry into his house."

The thing goes on for weeks and months. The Chancellor is faithfully supported by his daughter, "Madame la Duchesse d'York, who is as worthy a woman (aussi brave femme)—the word 'honnête' is not strong enough—as I have met in my life; and she upholds with as much courage, cleverness, and energy the dignity to which she has been called, as if she were of the blood of the kings, or of Guzman at the least, or Mendocce."¹

Clarendon is cleared by his judges, but the agitation in the country is great. One day the Duke of Buckingham is seen "ready to get to horse and ride post-haste towards the Duchy of York, this being his Government";² other lords are about to do the same, and leave the Whitehall amusements, so disquieting is the intelligence received from the country. In the streets of London the "insolence of the mob" is on the increase, and they are seen to drink publicly the health of Bristol as being "le champion de la patrie."³

For this and sundry other reasons it does not seem

He causes Bellings to write to Lionne on his behalf: "He hopes you will form no ill opinion of him on account of those charges."
July 24, 1663.

¹ To the King. August 7, 1664.

² To the King. August 9, 1663.

³ To Leonne. October 8, 1663.

impossible to Cominges that the English "may be tempted again to try and taste a commonwealth."¹ For they well remember the part they played in the world when Cromwell ruled over them : a better reason for a possible change than any trouble raised by Bristol.

All this the Sun-King read with great attention ; he pondered over Cominges's accounts of parliamentary institutions and the way they worked, over the inconveniences of houses where members could *loqui ex mente* and say freely all that came into their heads. The result of his meditations on this troublesome subject he caused to be noted down, in his memoirs, for the instruction of his son and of his descendants : " This subjection which places the sovereign under a necessity to receive the law from his people is the worst evil which can happen to a man in our situation. . . . I must now represent to you the misery of those who are abandoned to the indiscreet will of an assembled rabble (*une populace assemblée*). . . . A prince who wants to leave some lasting tranquillity to his people and an unimpaired prerogative to his successors cannot too carefully suppress that tumultuous audacity.

" But," the Sun-King added, with a complacent smile, " this is lingering too much on a subject which has no personal interest for you, and which may serve only to enlighten you on the sad state of your neighbours. For it is not doubtful that when you reign after me, you will find no authority that does not consider itself honoured for deriving from you its origin and character ; no constituted body which, in the matter of its suffrages, will wander from the bounds of respect ; no company

¹ To the King. May 5, 1664.

which does not understand that its grandeur is linked to the good of your service, and that its safety depends upon its humble submission." ¹

So much for the prophesying power of Cominges, who foresaw a republic established in England, and of Louis Quatorze, who foretold of an absolute monarchy finally established in France for ever.

¹ "Mémoires de Louis XIV," Dreyss's ed., Paris, 1868, 2 vols., 8vo. vol. ii. ; "Supplement aux Mémoires de l'année 1666," pp. 6, *et seq.*

CHAPTER VII.

RELIGIOUS MATTERS.

WHILE political institutions offered to a subject of the Sun-King such a field for observation, the situation of the Church and the management of religious affairs was a scarcely smaller cause of wonder.

In France there was only one source of political authority, only one of religious power, only one literary ideal, one art, and one philosophy ; so thought at least the “gens bien pensants,” Cominges among them. The avenues to heaven were neatly cut, easily perceptible, as straight and grand as were the avenues of Versailles, they could not be mistaken ; few dared to stray out of them into the brambles and bushes ; later in the reign sentries with loaded muskets guarded the line to prevent any wanderings into the forbidden lands ; and from the windows of his palace old Louis Quatorze, whose sun was setting, could at least please himself with the thought that all his subjects, without exception, had no choice but to follow the right road to everlasting felicity.

Not so in England : brambles spread themselves at the

very gate of Whitehall ; the avenues were overgrown ; sentries were derided ; their muskets missed fire, and sharpshooters in disquieting numbers filled the underwoods.

The variety of religions in England greatly puzzled the French Ambassador ; his tone, when he speaks of “caquiers” and “millénaires,” is not very respectful, and he anticipates catastrophes from this want of uniformity in creeds. It must be observed, however, that, though a devout Christian himself, Cominges was no bigot, and he spoke of the minor beliefs of his own co-religionists with great freedom. The important point was not to wander outside the avenues, but, so long as one kept within them, much was allowed. The tone of Cominges's correspondence with Lionne concerning the Roman curia is remarkable for the liberty of the judgments passed upon papal policy, indulgences, &c.

The Court of Rome, it is true, was not then in favour with the grand Monarch. The French Ambassador, the Marquis de Créqui, had been grossly insulted and assaulted by the papal guards ; one of his wife's pages had been killed by them (1662), and a negotiation was pending demanding satisfaction on account of this rough breach of etiquette. War was even contemplated ; the Pope was levying recruits in Switzerland, and, much to the disgust of Lionne, was using for it the monies left to him as a legacy by Cardinal Mazarin, though the late Eminence had stated that they should be used against the Turk. His Holiness was mistaking for a Turk, Lionne wrote,¹ the eldest son of the Church ! But a fleet was making ready at Toulon, which would cool

¹ Lionne to Cominges. February 28, 1663 ; August 12, 1663.

the military ardour of the Roman ecclesiastics. So much temerity on the part of these men of peace is, Cominges answers, a sign of the times ; things are greatly altered since the centuries of faith and the Holy Ghost has visibly withdrawn from the Roman curia.¹ The Pope at length submits, and this creates a great impression throughout Europe, in London as elsewhere. Cominges congratulates his friend Lionne upon his success, recommending to him, however, to be careful and to hold the Roman diplomatists very tight : “ I expect everything of monks and bigots.”²

A legate is sent by the Pope to arrange matters, but he is long in coming, “ he is so big and fat.”³ When he has reached France, endless difficulties arise, the negotiation is interrupted and a rumour is spread that he has placed Avignon under an interdict. But it is not true, says Lionne, and even “ had he had time to cast this censure over the place it would have had no effect and would have been badly executed.”⁴

In the meantime, the adversaries of Louis circulate the most absurd news as to his designs. He is at one time reported to intend an occupation of Geneva, and he begs his agents abroad to destroy this dangerous legend, giving Cominges at the same time an indication of his ideas as to his duty in religious matters, to which ideas it is a pity he did not strictly adhere all his life. “ Do not omit anything in your power to destroy this fable of a siege of Geneva which some, out of envy towards me, spread, that I may lose the friendship of

¹ To the King. November 26, 1663. ² March 3, 1664.

³ Lionne to Cominges. April 3, 1663.

⁴ The King to Cominges. October 13, 1663.

all the Protestants, who have often been a very useful help to France. My adversaries want to secure that help to themselves. Never has this thought crossed my mind, as the event will show. I have all the zeal I ought for the true worship of God, but I do not believe it is His will that it be established by arms and through the invasion of foreign states.”¹

“Do, please, destroy, by sneers or good reasons,” Lionne writes, on his part, “this newly-started absurdity concerning Geneva. How could it be? We are at daggers and swords drawn with the Court of Rome—greatly to our regret—and they fancy the storm that is brewing will explode on the Vatican’s bitterest enemies, who did no ill to us, and who would have done anything rather than assassinate our Ambassador!”²

The difference is at length composed : a Legate comes to Paris to present the excuses of his master ; a pyramid is raised in Rome and an exceedingly fine medal is struck to commemorate the event.³ Cominges is delighted at the news, and again congratulates his friend upon his success : “May you fully enjoy the sight of Monseigneur the Legate, who will, I doubt not, greet you in a most gracious manner, as he owes his mission to you more than to any one else. He cannot, without ingratitude, refuse to you a large number of indulgences and consecrated beads, given that, not to speak of the madness of his family and

¹ January 28, 1663.

² January 28, 1663.

³ It represents the Legate reading the apology of the Pope to Louis XIV.; the die is preserved at the Hôtel des Monnaies, Paris.

the firmness of the King, you are the true cause of his having been honoured with such a fine and magnificent function. If any such fall into your hands—I do not speak of functions; I would have none of this sort—I mean indulgences—send me a good deal of them, for in this country opportunities for using them are not scarce, though most of the men and women do not hold such boons with sufficient consideration.” The other part of society, however, is in such a need of them as to “exhaust the provision the Legate may have carried with him when leaving the place from whence they spring.”¹

Bitter quarrels all these, but family quarrels; and the point was that, quarrelling or not, the family remained *one*. When the question was of the main problems of our lives, Cominges’s tone was quite different; he did not sneer any longer. Having been advised by Lionne to take some diversion, because it would do good to his mind and improve his health, he answers: “My age does not allow of these useless occupations; and what I have left of life I will turn into account with regard to my death, considering, in the past, my faults to detest them, and, in the future, nothing else but eternity. What do you think of these thoughts? Are they not Christian ones, and better than those of some who at fifty still *butterfly it* (*volent le papillon*) and go and are burnt by the smallest light that shines in their eyes. Only too long did I follow such bad examples.”² His feelings were, in fact, similar to Montaigne’s, who, in a famous passage of his “*Essays*,” declares that the great thing in life is to “*build one’s death*.”

¹ June 19, 1664.

² December 24, 1663.

✓ Looking around him, Cominges was struck with the multiplicity of beliefs entertained by the English nation, and his forebodings were accordingly very sombre. He shudders when thinking of "this nation so deeply gnawed and ruined by false religions that nothing short of a miracle will be wanted to save it."¹ On another occasion he informs Lionne of the burial of a dissenting minister: "Six days ago they buried a minister belonging to the third monarchy sect; and his body was followed by more than ten thousand men." What can the third monarchy be? Lionne inquires. "A most proper question," Cominges answers. "The third monarchy sect claims no other author and adherent than my secretary and myself, who, thanks to the ill-pronouncing of the one or the ill-hearing of the other, have given birth to it. But I smother it in its cradle and place in its room the *fifth* monarchy, being the monarchy of the just, under which the end of the world will happen; a creed not very different from the tenets of the millenarists, to whom it is proper to join the anabaptists, 'Kakers,' and a number of other enthusiasts. . . . They it is who gave so much pomp to the funeral of the late preacher."²

More serious doings take place daily in the provinces. Fanatics swarm everywhere "though the prisons be full of them and soldiers constantly running after them."³ Charles himself is greatly in favour of the Catholic creed, for political as well as religious causes: "He will do nothing against our religion, except under

¹ To the King. September 13, 1663.

² September 27 and October 5, 1663.

³ To Lionne. September 29, 1664.

pressure of his Parliament. I find he is well aware that no other creed matches so well with the absolute authority of kings.”¹ Long dispatches are forwarded to Louis to make him aware of the discontent created in one or the other part of the population by the various acts concerning religious questions, passed by the King and Parliament. The Declaration of 1663 (concerning the “dispensing” power of the Crown) has produced among the parties a variety of commotions, “according as they are moved by hate towards their King, by love for the Republic, or scorn for the ministry.”² As for the Act of Uniformity (1662), it has had “such baleful effects that conspiracies against his Majesty have been discovered, and sentences of death or exile have been passed. . . . But far from the fanatics being overawed, they are the more ready to attempt the life of members of the royal family, caring so little for their own lives that they seem to run to death as if there was no other remedy to their wrongs.”³

Worse than all is the state of Catholics in Ireland. They have been dispossessed of their lands, and the King has pledged himself at the time of his accession not to trouble the Protestant occupiers of them. The Irish, in the meanwhile, are famished and get no pity. The King, it is true, is kindly disposed towards them, as he is towards everything and everybody, but his is an empty kindness which has been followed by no acts as yet : “The King of Great Britain, who is by nature very kind and just, would like that each and all might

¹ April 12, 1663.

² To the King. January 22, 1663.

³ Same dispatch.

have only cause to be pleased and none to complain ; but under whichever side the affair be looked into, it is so thorny and has been obscured by so many Acts of Parliament, and by the pledge taken by the King at his accession, that it is impossible to discover means to settle satisfactorily the affair, and to dispense justice to the one and to leave untouched the rights of the others. . . .

“The expelled ones are feeble, and the land-owners powerful, which insures the total ruin for ever of that unfortunate nation that grazes grass in the fields and has no other place of abode but woods and caverns—while their enemies, loaded with greater sins than themselves, triumph over them and get rich from their spoils.”¹

Economic laws are passed from time to time, and make the situation worse : “Parliament has resolved after a two days discussion, to prohibit the importation of cattle from Ireland into England. This will be a new cause of ruin for the Irish, who had no other trade left but that one.”²

Another sign of the times noted by Cominges, consists in the increase of prophets and soothsayers as well in society as out of it. Some foretell disasters, “thus giving great pain and anxieties to people of the old stamp, who still revere the memory of Merlin and King Arthur.”³ Some pester Cominges himself in the hope of converting him to their beliefs. Vain, however, were their efforts, as this letter testifies :—

¹ To Lionne. June 23, 1664.

² Cominges, Verneuil, and Courtin to the King. November 1, 1665.

³ Cominges to Lionne. January 19, 1665.

"To the inborn curiosity I have in getting information concerning all that takes place in the world I owe the visits of the Earl of Pembroke. . . . This nobleman, as innocent as a lamb . . . is so deeply convinced of the truth of all the prophecies I mentioned to you of late, and so earnestly desirous that everybody may wander in his mind as much as he does, that he spends his finest rhetoric to enlist me as a member of his party. . . . He is convinced that you are a downright worthy man, equal to the grandest things, but he asserts that all those gifts are not enough, and that many excellent people are to be seen endowed with such, who speak contemptuously of prophecies. I did not conceal from him that I was afraid you were somewhat tainted by this disease and that it would be no easy task to curb you to blind submission. . . .

"Such is now my only entertainment in England, but if it lasts long I am resolved to leave town. . . . These fools have got it into their head to pester me and to make a prophet of me, which in truth is a plain matter enough, and consists in running about the streets, making grimaces, answering out of purpose, and by monosyllables, raising the eyes to heaven, keeping one's hat on, and being very dirty. . . .

"But this is enough of jesting while we are in the Holy Week ; I must at least allow some interval of time between this and the Tenebræ which I am going to hear. The King has done me the honour to lend me his French musicians, thanks to whom a number of people in society come to my chapel, Madame de Castlemaine especially, whom I mean to regale as well as I can."¹

¹ To Lionne. April 17, 1664.

Catholic worship was performed, by diplomatic privilege, in the chapel annexed to Exeter House ; and there Cominges had the pleasure, not only of "regaling" Lady Castlemaine and the "beau monde" with good music, but to secure every day a large attendance to the masses said there by his chaplain. His pleasure on this score would have been unmixed but for the expense it entailed ; but he considered it unpolitical, as well as unchristian, to retrench on this item. In one of his numerous complaints concerning his insufficient salary and the high prices one has to pay for everything in London, we read : "This is, without comparison, the place in the world where expenses are largest, and where money is most freely squandered. We are, I think, very lucky in the absence of an Ambassador of Spain ; our master could not then refuse to open his purse. It is an impossibility to live here upon two thousand crowns (écus) per month. Without speaking of extraordinary expenses, only the hiring of houses, the change, the carriage of letters absorb a third of what his Majesty gives me. I would not complain if I had means to defray this expense, but the idea that I may be shamed in this puts me on the rack. . . . I did not even mention to you the costs of the maintenance of my chapel, which pass all I had expected ; they are large, but so indispensable that it would be better to retrench in everything else rather than not show magnificence in this. I have every day six masses, which are scarcely enough for the number of people who come to hear them. There are as many as sixty or eighty communions each Sunday, and the number will largely increase as soon as the chase is given to the priests."¹

¹ To Lionne. April 19, 1663.

✓ While orthodoxy is thus propagated with the help of music and the support of Lady Castlemaine, prophets continue to multiply. When they have not, as the Earl of Pembroke, the privilege to belong to society, they are summarily disposed of : " We are in the land of prophets. We have here a new Jeremiah who speaks only of fires and flames ; he has been sent to gaol. Another asserts that he has had a vision in which God has declared to him the day and place of Judgment, the number and quality of the elect. This one has accepted six Jacobuses to go and disclose his revelations outside London." ¹

As for the Established Church, its " bishops (not one of whom is of noble extraction) are held in no consideration ; and, to speak the truth, it appears very strange to see in the stalls of the choir a bishop and canons dressed in their pontifical robes, have by them their wives and children. A Scotchman wrote some time ago as to this : *Vidi episcopum et episcopam, episcopulos et episcopulas*. I saw the bishop and the bishopess, and the little bishops and little bishopesses." ²

The avenues were overgrown with weeds, and the sentries were derided.

¹ To Lionne. December 10, 1663.

² To Lionne. August 15, 1665.

CHAPTER VIII.

LA GUERRE ET LA PAIX.

BUSINESS was also the subject of the Ambassador's correspondence. An enormous number of dispatches of an appalling length bear testimony to his diplomatic zeal—a zeal which, however, as it turned out, was all spent in vain.

The key-stone to the foreign policy of Louis at that time was, as we know, Spain. The pride of the Spanish house was to be humbled down ; valuable spoils were to be appropriated ; towards this object Lionne was to provide reasons sufficient ; Condé and Turenne men and guns. There were, however, difficulties in the way.

The principal difficulty came from the fact that with all its power, riches, expanse of sea-coasts, France had, so to say, no navy. Not far from her territory, on the north and east, two rival nations, England and Holland, covered the sea with their ships. France was so far behind them as not even to be admitted to the honour of the contest. It was indispensable, in order that she might act freely on land, that she should feel secure concerning the attitude of the naval powers ; a result which she

might obtain either by binding the two naval countries to keep the peace, or by entering into an alliance with one of them against both the other and Spain too.

Louis tried both experiments, the peaceful and the warlike one ; he tried also both alliances, the Dutch one and the English too. For a number of reasons the English alliance accorded more with his personal wishes ; the help of the English could be more effectual ; they were a heretical nation, it is true, but the case was not hopeless ; they had had a taste of Republic, but they were not, as the Dutch, confirmed, irretrievable "*républicains*" ; lastly, a recommendation to court the English alliance was the last legacy of dying Mazarin. In the letter to his brother of England notifying the death of his "cousin" the Cardinal, Louis puts forward this last plea : "I feel assured that for the love of me, and on account of the esteem and affection with which you honoured my said cousin, you will give some regrets to his memory, and especially when you know that the advice he most ardently tried to impress upon my mind during his last and most painful sufferings was to bind myself to you in as straight a friendship and union as I could, and so to arrange as to make the interests of both our States similar."¹

The lesson was not lost, and from that day, with an ever-present persistence, Louis kept in view the line of conduct thus drawn by Mazarin. For many years his attempts to knit himself to the English King were never given up. Even when at war with him he had this plan before his eyes, hoping, when peace would be restored, to be able to fulfil it. Drafts for a treaty of

¹ Louis to Charles. March 11, 1661.

intimate union¹ and for a restoration of the Catholic religion abound in the French archives, some by French and some by English hands.

Several obstacles lay in the way. The unsurmountable one proved to be the temper of the English nation. In this case as in many similar circumstances it steadily adhered to its own policy; statesmen could be persuaded, courtiers won, kings put to sleep; but the nation remained as it was. That statesmanship which never failed it in great crises, and which had in former times so powerfully helped Elizabeth to be a great queen, was a contrary element, the power of which Louis was too clever to ignore, and over which he could prevail only for short periods.

Spain was the enemy. She had given a daughter of her house as a wife to Louis, while Portugal, with whom she was at war, had given a wife to Charles; but the English hated the Portuguese, and the French wanted to break the power of Spain. This made the diplomatic game rather intricate, the more so as Spain was at peace with France, and had exchanged with her in the last treaties the most express assurances of friendship. The two kings had bound themselves to love and help one another "as good brothers."² It had

¹ "Art. 1.—Il y aura ligue défensive contre tous généralement avec lesquels l'un ou l'autre des Seigneurs Rois se trouveront en guerre, soit par des *rébellions et brouilleries qui leur seront suscitées par leurs propres sujets* ou guerre étrangère." Draft submitted to Louis by the Earl of St. Albans, Fontainebleau, July 10, 1661.

² "Art. 1.—Il est convenu et accordé que . . . les Rois Très chrétien et catholique . . . s'entr'aimeront comme bons frères, procurants de tout leur pouvoir le bien, l'honneur et la réputation l'un de l'autre." Treaty of the Pyrenees, November 7, 1659.

been understood that Spain would have Portugal if she could conquer it, and France Poland if the French King could secure the crown for one of his family. The pretext for a change of attitude towards Spain arose from these arrangements.

"This letter shall be deciphered by the Comte d'Estrades himself," Louis writes (July 16, 1661), and in that letter he explains his grievance. The Spaniard does not adhere closely to the peace arrangements; seeing which, Louis has taken counsel with his advisers, and they have agreed that he is no longer bound by his word. "It was considered on this occasion that the opposition and the difficulties thrown in the way by the Emperor, moved to this by the Spaniards, in order to prevent the Polish crown falling, according to my wish, to one of my family, were an open breach of the first article of the treaty of peace. The two Kings had bound themselves, by this article, sincerely to procure, with all their might, and as good brothers, the advantage the one of the other. I am, therefore, no more bound to second my brother the Catholic King in his attempts to recover the Portuguese crown than he to help me to secure the Polish one for my house."

The English and French interests, therefore, agree, both countries being opposed to Spain. The English King must hasten to conclude his Portuguese marriage, which was then only in contemplation; he will lend his help to the house of Braganza against Spain. France will provide the money.

But the Armada times were remote times; the English nation was very far from entertaining towards

the Spaniard the feelings it had in former times ; the power it doubted most was not Spain, but France. Mr. Pepys very exactly summarized the situation when he wrote : " We do naturally love the Spanish and hate the French." This love and this hate the French Ambassadors had against them, and all their efforts were bent upon foiling the effect of these feelings.

To obtain naval and military aid for Portugal, while France would provide the money, and to arrange a treaty of closer union between France and England, were the two main objects assigned by Louis to his representatives at the British Court. D'Estrades's mission had been unexpectedly closed, and all he had been able to report to his master was favourable assurances from heedless Charles concerning the contemplated union. Cominges had been despatched to London with all speed to turn these assurances to account before they had been forgotten. But he was not long in discovering that his was no easy task.

Louis, who did not like much waiting, had been in hopes the treaty would be arranged in a trice. Cominges found the English statesmen in a very different mood. They were in business questions slow and sleepy ; they put forth endless pretexts for delays, and discovered objections and difficulties without number. " We must have patience," Cominges wrote. " Men here scarcely know themselves ; they have almost no form of government ; the evils they have suffered are yet so recent that all their efforts aim at preventing the return of the same. . . . They are cold, slow, phlegmatic, . . . motionless, frozen," &c.¹ The Chancellor

¹ To the King. February 12, 1663.

argues that Cominges, having then not made his entrée, is not yet an ambassador proper, and cannot legitimately negotiate. "An absurd reason this," observes the Sun-King. "The entrée has nothing to do with it, provided the Ambassador has regular powers. The Sieur de Lionne has treated even of the peace at Madrid concealed in a hole of the Buen Retiro. . . . May be the Chancellor thinks his master inclines rather towards Spain than towards me." ¹ Woe to him if he does, and woe to the Grand Council of Spain—"that Council of Spain which attributes to itself the qualification of *eternal* by reason that it never alters its maxims, but goes straight to its goal till it has reached it : so it does, may be, with secondary Powers ; but with the help of God I have succeeded somewhat in shaking these high maxims." ²

In vain. The English nation would not allow itself to be reasoned out of its hatred of France. Cominges could not doubt it, and he was soon to write, using word for word the same language as Pepys : "Les Anglais haïssent naturellement les Français." ³ This feeling displayed itself on all occasions ; the most absurd rumours were circulated and readily believed when contrary to the French interest : "I must end with a piece of news which will make you laugh. Two days ago I presented to the Queen-mother the calash which the King has sent to her. Half the town, I believe, ran to see it ; and they were saying the one to the other that this was the tribute paid by France to England,

¹ The King to d'Estrades (then at the Hague). April 13, 1663.

² The King to Cominges. October 17, 1663.

³ To the King. May 10, 1663.

and that to conceal this obligation I had been permitted by the King of England to offer it to his mother. After that, I hope you will not doubt my cleverness, seeing how skilfully I have drawn a veil over the misfortunes of my country.”¹ The Exchange has become such a fine place for the invention of false news as to “rival the Piazza Navone or the Rialto,” these places being, as everybody knows, “the kingdom proper of news-makers.”²

If an English Ambassador was sent to Spain, the mob accompanied him in the streets with hurrahs and arranged a triumph for him : “Four days ago M. Fanchon (Fanshaw) left for Spain, where he goes as an Ambassador, in one of the finest vessels of the King his master. I think that out of vanity he purposely passed my door for me to see how he was escorted on board. He was in one of the Royal coaches, accompanied by twelve horsemen and followed by twenty coaches drawn by six horses. His equipage is a match for Jean de Paris’s own, and a number of young noblemen follow him out of curiosity. The King has lent him four splendid pieces of tapestry and a number of vases and utensils in gilt silver. . . . A large quantity of the common people accompanied him, making loud vows for his success in his mission.”³

Matters were not so easy when the question was of French affairs. The unpopularity Clarendon had won for himself by the sale of Dunkirk (so great that the

¹ To Lionne. February 16, 1665.

² To the King. January 15, 1664.

³ To Lionne. February 4, 1664.

people baptised his fine new house the New Dunkirk) ¹ made him shy of French Ambassadors and things. He was not to be seen; he had the gout; he had been ordered to the country; when he could be met, his inability to speak French was another difficulty, and he scarcely concealed his regret not to have to do with d'Estrades, whom he could address in English.

Ordinaire after *ordinaire* came and went, and still no progress could be reported to Louis. If Cominges, having nothing to say, chose to say nothing, his master, as little inclined to wait as ever, caused Lionne to inquire for the reason. The reason was, the English were in no hurry, and the Chancellor had the gout. The Ambassador was, however, reminded that no *ordinaire* should go without a dispatch of some sort, so that something, anything, might be read to Louis. Hence the number of reports beginning with descriptions of a quiet and stillness as different as possible of the Louis Quatorze ideal. "Those great events by which the face of nations is sometimes altered, which give speech to the least eloquent and provide Ambassadors with matter for their dispatches, are not the fruits of peace nor of the idleness in which to all appearances this Court lies buried. As it does not feel at present the spur of any urgent affair outside the country, it takes interest only into home things, forgetting that well watching sentries allow the camp to sleep in peace. Nothing new is to be seen, and scarcely does the sun, that is as old as the world, allow its rays to be perceived here." ²

¹ "Vous saurez que l'on nomme déjà par sobriquet le palais que fait bâtir M. le Chancelier Hyde la nouvelle Dunkerque" Cominges to Lionne, October 9, 1664.

² To the King. December 3, 1663.

The difficulties arising out of Clarendon's reserve were increased by Cominges's punctiliousness, stiffness, and sometimes ill-humour. This last defect had been greatly increased by the way in which the climate had acted upon his health. While the Chancellor had to shut his doors to all on account of his gout, Cominges had to keep home owing to fluxions, scurvy, and a variety of other diseases : "Were there a kingdom to win, I must to bed ; sleep will perhaps restore my faculties. I have now a fluxion on the shoulder and chest. The climate of this country does not suit me at all. . . . I have become nearly paralytic, and I suffer especially from a disease called scurvy, which is very frequent here. All my teeth shake ; they say it will be nothing, and that I will only lose five or six this time. A pretty piece of consolation, is it not ? All considered, if I have more than four attacks of this disease I shall go home without one single tooth left." ¹ He saw physicians, but with little effect. He lacked one very necessary item, which ought always to be mixed with remedies for them to be of any use, namely, faith. He constantly derides them, even certain baths which he had praised at first, but which did nothing in the end but to "flatter sa douleur."

Fever appears from time to time, with the result that Cominges is once given up. Under this trial the soldier remains true to himself ; he causes his secretary to write and send his best compliments to the King and Queen ; for, to his deathbed, he continues attentive to etiquette, and has the recommendation conveyed to his wife not to come, for she would probably arrive too late, and suffer

¹ To Lionne. March 5 and 15, 1663 ; April 17, 1664.

therefore unnecessary pain. Cominges, as many did in his time, acted up to the recommendation of La Fontaine, who wanted men to go out of life "ainsi que d'un banquet," with thanks and compliments to their host. Cominges' secretary, Bruchet, explains in the same letter ¹ that, as for business, the Ambassador did not, on account of impending death, abate one jot of his claims, and that he was as stiff as ever. Far too stiff indeed, for, unknown to him, his *raideur* was one difficulty more on a road which was not of the easiest.

He was scarcely recovered and not yet out of danger, when he was protesting of his intention to say his say and keep the same tone to the last: "They are mightily complaining of the dryness of my last memoir to the King of England and to his Council. Well, if I die, this will add little weight to my load; and if I recover, I shall know how to defend as well the manner as the matter of my writing." ²

No wonder such an attitude could not please the easy-going Charles, who hated to have trouble; it greatly helped Clarendon to protract business, imputing much to "the capriciousness of [Cominges's] nature, which made him hard to treat with and not always vacant at the hours himself assigned, being hypochondriac and seldom sleeping without opium." ³ Often and often Louis tried to smooth the temper of his envoy, and with great lightness of touch, using the most carefully selected words, in order not to give offence, attempted to per-

¹ Bruchet to Lionne. March 30, 1665.

² April 7, 1665.

³ "Life of Edward, Earl of Clarendon . . . written by himself," Basil, 1798, 5 vols., 8vo, vol. iii. p. 298 (year 1665).

suade him to negotiate "sans chaleur ni emportement." Even while dying, Cominges persisted in his warmth.

In this as in many other things, Holles was his exact counterpart in Paris, and wrote with great satisfaction how he had snubbed the French King himself: "I was yesterday at Colombe, to take my leave of the Queene, who is gone allready towards Bourbon this very wett morning. The King came thither, whilst I was there, and at last gave me a little salute with his hand; and trewly, my lord, I answered him with such a one, because I knew his Ambassadors in England are accueillies (*sic*) in an other manner."¹ The result had been that Holles did not learn a word of what he wanted, but that did not matter much in his eyes. Another result was that both Charles and Louis began to think of using other means to come to an understanding, and the great influence of Madame, the outcome of which was only to be felt later, began during those years.

A variety of minor questions were also the subject of the official correspondence. Never forget, Louis had written to Cominges, "that there is nothing in the whole world that does not come under the cognizance and fall within the sphere of an Ambassador."² Cominges accordingly wrote about all sorts of political and commercial subjects, and the range of his dispatches cover, not only the whole of Europe, but Africa also, America, the Indies, China, and Japan. News did not travel then as it does now, and events were not known at the same time all round the world; they were always worth

¹ August 22, 1665. Lister's "Life and Administration of Clarendon," London, 1838, 3 vols., 8vo, vol. iii. p. 392.

² February 22, 1663.

the mentioning, and there was little fear of *double emploi*. Thus the Ambassador sends to his master the latest particulars he has been able to collect concerning the doings of the Grand Duke of Muscovy, the anxieties of Venice by reason of Turkish conquests, the impending siege of Vienna, the apostacy of a number of missionaries owing to the witchery and allurements of the fair "Japonaises," the arriving in the Downs of a ship from Bantam "who has made the journey in one year : a thing unparalleled till now." The name of the vessel which thus succeeded in beating all previous records is unfortunately not given.¹

Among the extraneous subjects which more constantly reappear, a conspicuous place is allotted to the Algerine and Tunisian corsairs. Weak as was his navy, Louis did not lose sight of them ; he meant to be respected by all, even by those infidels. He once describes with delight, in a letter to Cominges, how his squadron has run aground two corsair ships near La Goulette and has burnt them. "The Turks in them to the number of six hundred jumped into the water ; the loss incurred by them is not the main result of the encounter, but it demonstrates that, contrary to what was believed, the vessels of these corsairs are not so swift that it be an impossibility for us to overreach them. A small capture has also been made of twenty-six Turks, who have been conveyed to my galleys at Toulon."²

What steam now is for our navy, slaves were in those times. They were the propelling power which allowed

¹ To Lionne. February 21, 1664. The ship brings news of the burning of Manilla by Chinese pirates.

² To Cominges. April 18, 1663.

to ply against the wind. Louis was ever anxious to better provide himself with such an indispensable commodity. "We hear," writes Lionne, "of the capture of three thousand Moors [by the English at Tangiers]. In case it were true, the King would greatly like you to obtain from the King of England a gift of some part of their number. If you fail, try at least to have them all or most of them for money. Mind in any case that they are not given to others."¹ The English Government unfortunately turn out to want all their slaves. The English will not even part with a number of convicts which they had been asked kindly to sell.² Cominges then bethinks himself of the Royal Company of the Guinea coast, "the staple article of whose trade consists in slaves." Their produce, however, is of doubtful quality; the men are tall and strong, but "so obstinate that they often prefer to die rather than work. I will, however, if you like, secure a hundred or so, as an experiment."³ He is allowed to try, but the price happens to be enormous: "I have asked [the Syndic of the company] for one hundred men between 27 and 35, sound in their body and complete in their limbs, to be delivered up at Toulon. They want two hundred crowns (écus) for each. . . . I do not think the bargain an acceptable one, as you can find much better men at Leghorn for one hundred écus or four hundred francs."⁴

While slaves were not purchased, and the treaty was not signed, and the Portuguese were very scantily

¹ To Cominges. August 12, 1663.

² Batailler to the King. November 30, 1663.

³ To Lionne. October 18, 1663.

⁴ To the King. December 3, 1663.



assisted, an event was preparing of a nature to make even much more complicated the diplomatic game that was being played. The same spirit of rivalry which existed in England towards France on account of the latter's territorial power, was entertained towards Holland as a naval nation. The British Kingdom and the Dutch Republic were both eager to increase their colonial possessions, their trade and their fleets. Spain of course had still its immense colonies, but her conquering propensities were spent ; both east and west she had come to a standstill. Not so Holland ; not so England ; the two were building their colonial empire, watching very jealously over each other, and afraid the best countries yet to be occupied as colonies might fall to the lot of the rival nation. Trading and military fleets constantly crossed and recrossed each other at sea, and strange reports were circulated and greedily accepted on the Change at Amsterdam and London as to the wealth brought home by the last convoy, and as to the ill doings, malpractices, unjust occupations and barbarities of the agents of the other State. Greed and hate were thus kept well alive and ready for instant use ; they too, great propelling powers. War would ensue some day ; Louis knew it ; Cominges had left him no doubt as to this : the Dutch are hated, he wrote, "*on meurt d'envie de les attaquer.*"¹ Louis made up his mind to prevent hostilities, if that were possible : he did not want any of the two to destroy the other and to remain the henceforth unopposed master of the sea. Cominges was instructed to speak and write and entreat accordingly ; which he did as well as his scurvy, the Chancellor's

¹ To Lionne, February 28, 1664. Same to the King.

gout, Charles's dissipations, the Duke of York and the people's wilfulness permitted.

War was becoming every day more threatening.¹ While Cominges was discoursing and writing dispatches, ships were building in the Thames, and the nation looked with pride at the splendid fleets that were making ready. It thought of the coming contest as of a sport: there would be, of course, some important battles, but they would be won; besides this, most of the game would consist in chasing the Dutch merchantmen; there would be a fine sport indeed, and spoils worth the risks. "The Duke of York spends all his days and part of his nights upon the river, seeing that his ships are being armed and the stores filled. . . . The Duke and his party act as if he were on the point of putting to sea. On Saturday he ordered out of Chatham the *St. James*, the best ship of England, bearing 80 pieces. His upholsterer is furnishing his apartments there, and his quartermaster marks the 'cabanes' for the noblemen who are to accompany him."²

As for Charles himself, the sportive side of the venture pleases him very much, and he takes a particular delight in paying, he too, visits to the dockyards. He indulges in trips at sea, and when the weather is unpropitious, he remains on board a little longer to see his courtiers look pale. "Yesterday the King of England did me the honour to take me with him to see the launching of a vessel of 1,200 tons burden; a finer and more mag-

¹ To the King, July 21, 1664. To Lionne, July 28, 1664. War will begin in Guinea and be continued in Europe. To Lionne, September 15, 1664.

² To Lionne. November 3, 1664.

nificent I never saw. While painters are busy embellishing the outside and the rooms, masts are planted, ropes and artillery provided. . . .

"We saw there all the old generals and captains of Cromwell, who are very loyal and full of confidence on account of their last successes against the Dutch. The King told me before them, that they all had had the plague, but that they were quite sound now and less accessible to the disease than others. I must confess, sire, that nothing finer than all this navy can well be imagined ; nothing grander and more impressive than this large number of ships ready made or being built, this vast quantity of guns, masts, ropes, planks and other things used in this sort of warfare. The King had an excellent meal served to us on one of his yachts ; he drank the health of your Majesty and asked the company to second him, and this was heartily done. I returned thanks, and in your behalf I proposed the health of the King of England. Both were honoured with so many guns and so much noise that the weather changed.

"While we were thus carousing, the sea became rough and completed what wine had begun. The Queen, who was on the river with the ladies, escaped the sickness but not the fear. All the rest were less lucky, as was only too apparent. The squall being over, the sky cleared, the ship was launched, and it was possible to enjoy the sight without the inconvenience of the rain and hail. The ceremony being finished, the Queen went home with the coaches prepared for the King ; but he, who was greatly amused at seeing the others decomposed, did not care to allow us to do the same. It proved, however, an impossibility to use barges to return

to town, and we had to hire coaches and carriages at Greenwich to go back to Whitehall.”¹

Enchanted with this piece of wickedness, Charles did not fail to begin again, and, fever or no fever, he would have Cominges awakened before break of day and invited to accompany him again on similar excursions: “Last Monday, at five in the morning, the King of England sent me a message to ask me to go with him to Chatham to see six vessels, or rather six war machines, the finest and largest to be seen at sea.” The ship meant for the Duke of York, not after all the *St. James*, but the *Charles*, is a splendid piece of joinery; it has 80 guns, two of which, lodged on the forecastle, are culverins of prodigious length.²

War has not been declared yet, but reprisals have begun on both sides; the game has been opened; more serious play will soon follow. The French mediation has been a first time rejected;³ “the English are intoxicated with their present state,”⁴ and with the state of their navy; volunteers are being instructed—in the summary fashion then considered sufficient: “Part of the volunteers will leave [the Thames] on Monday with the fleet [and go by sea to Portsmouth] to inure themselves. The Dukes of Monmouth, Richmond, Buckingham, Norfolk, and several other noblemen are among them.”⁵

Disquieting news all this. Louis resolved to try one last effort in order to have the peace preserved.

¹ To the King. November 6, 1664.

² To the King. November 13, 1664.

³ English note of the 16th of October, 1664.

⁴ Ruvigny to Lionne. December 15, 1664.

⁵ To the King. November 16, 1664.

CHAPTER IX.

LA CÉLÈBRE AMBASSADE.

I. *Business.*

IF one Ambassador had failed, perhaps three would do better. Louis resolved to appoint "une célèbre ambassade extraordinaire" to represent him in England; and he gave his commission accordingly to a member of his own house, Henri de Bourbon, Duc de Verneuil, an illegitimate son of Henry the Fourth¹ and Henrietta de Balzac, Marquise de Verneuil ("I saw," writes Evelyn in his Diary, "the Duke of Verneuille, base-brother to the Queen-mother, a handsome old man and a great hunter"), Honoré Courtin, an intimate friend of Lionne, chosen by the King because he would have in England "a member of his council well versed in judicial matters,"² and then Cominges himself.

The necessity for the presence of an Ambassador with technical knowledge arose from the number of captures made by the English, who, while they hated

¹ Born in 1601, legitimized 1603, endowed with the bishopric of Metz 1608, which he kept, though not in holy orders, till 1652. He died at Verneuil in 1682.

² Instructions. April 4, 1665.



Honoré Courtin
c Ambassador to England, 1665
by Nanteuil



the Dutch, did not like much, as we know, the French, and who constantly stopped French boats and seized French goods. The object assigned to the efforts of the three was the same as before, namely to forward the preparation of the treaty of closer union, and to prevent war between England and the Dutch Republic. This last item was the more urgent. If war is not averted, the English will probably have the better of it, and if they have, Louis not unwisely remarks, "it will be very difficult to the other powers to deny to the English that domination over the sea to which they have always aspired. Of this empire they are now so greedy, that it may be asserted that from this wish and from their intention to secure to themselves the trade of the whole world, arise all the difficulties and quarrels they raise against the Dutch States." ¹

The three Ambassadors were recommended to pay a particular attention to Parliament and to members of the same, they being bent upon war, while Charles is more quietly inclined, though not lacking personal courage, "according to the testimony of Cromwell himself." In their intercourse with deputies they must show great tact, for members of Parliament are "very proud," and Ambassadors must avoid any appearance of pressure or interference. They must meddle with the country's affairs and not seem to be meddling, a very delicate task. They are allowed to distribute freely assurances and remonstrances, and promises of friendship, goodwill and eternal amity.

Loaded with as much coin of this sort as could be included in instructions of a remarkable length, Courtin

¹ Instructions to the three Ambassadors. April 4, 1665.

and Verneuil left Paris with all speed to join Cominges, not being allowed to wait for their equipage. They found at Calais "two very fine yachts, gilt all over, as well inside as outside. The rooms are wondrous neat, with carpets and velvet beds." They belonged to the Queen and King of England, who had sent them to honour their uncle Verneuil.

At Dover horses and footmen and royal carriages were in the same manner provided. On their way to the capital, "many people, at Dover, Canterbury, Rochester, kept inquiring from persons of our own suite why we were going to London; and being informed that we meant to secure peace between England and Holland, they without hesitation answered: If they come for nothing else, they might as well go back."¹ They continued none the less their journey, reached London on the 16th of April, 1665, and saw on the same day the King, who was "*en un lieu nommé Chine*" (Sheen). They are very well received, and "Milord Fichardin" (Fitzhardin) is particularly amiable.

They at once set to work, and at once discover that what had proved too much for Cominges alone would not be more easy for the three to obtain. The new-comers might be more supple or eloquent or persuasive; but to persuade Charles was nothing; the nation it was, now as before, that had to be persuaded, and the nation was entirely beyond their reach. Exactly a week after his arrival Courtin was already writing to Lionne that there was nothing to hope; the King wants peace, but Parliament wants war; and

¹ The Three to the King. April 20, 1665.

Parliament being the stronger party, war must be considered inevitable.

The three, none the less, began strenuously to fulfil their instructions ; they proposed a delay of two months before the fleets were allowed to weigh anchor, and they offered their mediation. But the English answers were long in coming, and when they came they were found to be dilatory. One day the Chancellor has his usual and opportune goût ; another day the audience is postponed "on account of the Sunday, for which they have here the greatest *égards*."¹ Courtin had long private conversations with Charles : he was in fact the real Ambassador all the while ; the King delighted in his talk, and found him a *charmeur*. "Short, with a beauish face and a somewhat ridiculous figure, Courtin was full of wit, good sense, judgment, maturity and grace. . . . He pleased everybody everywhere." So wrote St. Simon,² no easy man to please.

Charles would allow him to plead for hours, and fully to develop the assurances and remonstrances in his instructions ; he would be delighted at his Excellency's reasonings, ready wit, and clever retorts, but even he would not allow himself to be persuaded, because *that* was an impossibility ; because Parliament was there, and the country too. "'My fleet, Sir, is out of harbour even now, and I cannot call it back with honour, and then you must remember my people are in a rage against the Dutch.'"³ To this last reason, Courtin was not slow to perceive, agreeing in this with Cominges,

¹ The Three to the King. April 20, 1665.

² "Mémoires," de Boislile's ed., vol. iii. p. 280.

³ The Three to the King. April 23, 1665.

that there was no answer. "There is this difference between him [*i.e.*, Charles II.] and the King our master, that his Majesty can order his subjects to go as he pleases, but the King of England is bound to follow his."¹

Another difficulty came from the stubbornness of the Dutch. In the year 1662, Louis, foreseeing that the union with England would be very difficult to conclude, and unwilling to let one of the two great naval powers of the world to be utterly ruined by the other, had signed a treaty of alliance with Holland.² This convention he thought would not prevent his arranging a treaty with England; but, on the contrary, give more weight to his proposals, the refusal of which would entail, not the *status quo*, but declared hostility. The Dutch treaty in the meanwhile had kept all its force, and the English one was yet *in nubibus*; Louis was bound to help the States, and depending upon this they were the more aggressive, and proved scarcely less difficult to quiet than the English. The three Ambassadors did their best to win Van Gogh, the Envoy of the Republic, to their pacific programme; for, though acts of hostility were of daily occurrence, diplomatic relations had not yet been broken. To the appeals made to him, Van Gogh used to answer —

"Ah, sir, it is a very difficult thing you are asking! All I can say is our people are not more easy to govern than the English, and they would never approve of our

¹ Courtin to Lionne. April, 1665.

² Treaty of Paris, April 22, 1662. In case one of the two were attacked, the other was to declare war against the aggressor within four months.

making larger concessions than we have offered . . . We are unjustly attacked ; I have been an *homme d'armes* (he used those very terms), and I will well know how to die with the others ?' . . . We allowed him time to recover from this furious fit, which had been caused either by the excellence of his zeal, or maybe by a very long sword which was dangling at his side."¹

While the Ambassadors do their best to hurry on an understanding, the King of England and his Ministers formalize as much as they can. We are in May ; nothing has been done ; the warlike preparations continue, and at the very time when a naval battle is daily expected, Charles and Clarendon put forth the unexpected demand to have the negotiations carried on in writing : " ' Since I have come back to my kingdom, (says Charles) I have nearly forgotten the French language, and in truth the trouble I have in looking for my words allows the escape of my thoughts. I must needs have delay in order to be able to reflect and meditate upon things proposed to me in that language . . . ' " All this ignorance and lightness of thought the French Ambassadors politely deny.

" He added that his commissaries did not understand French. I retorted that many in his council spoke French as well as we did, and that we would use Latin if these gentlemen liked.

" ' No, no, no, ' said he, ' I assure you they will not desist, and they want to negotiate in writing. '

" ' This, Sire, I am very sorry we cannot do. '

" As we had come to this, the door was thrown open, and the Queen-mother, who was retiring, passed us,

¹ The Three to the King. May 11, 1665.

saying: '*Dieu vous bénisse*'; as showing the wish she had we might come to an understanding. The Earl of St. Albans showed himself at the aperture, and the King nodded to him, saying: 'Do come here; here is a little man I cannot convince or silence.'"

The King hereupon begins to talk English to St. Albans, the outcome of which conversation is that, as his *ultima ratio*, Charles puts forth the plea that it is supper time, and he therefore hurries away not to have his Castlemaine wait.¹

At the Castlemaine's the secret affairs of the State are freely discussed, and France is loudly denounced. Lauderdale is especially warm in his attacks; not he alone, however, "for the conclusion of his speech is on the lips of all Englishmen. You have only to go to the Exchange to hear it repeated every morning. For in this country everybody thinks it his right to speak of the affairs of State, and the very boatmen want the *mylords* to talk to them about such topics while they row them to Parliament."² In this noticeable remark the three forestalled, for many years, Montesquieu's well-known observation concerning the London tilers, who were espied by him reading the Gazette while they were at work on the roofs, so intent and so widely spread was the passion for politics in England.

Days and weeks and months pass. The fine fleet which Cominges had seen building is cruising in the North Sea, under command of the Duke of York; the Dutch fleet is also at sea under the orders of Obdam. A battle is imminent. One day of June while Cominges

¹ The Three to the King. May 24, 1665.

² The Three to Lionne. June 1, 1665.

and Courtin were taking their walk in the park of "St. Jemme," reports of guns are heard ; a rumour comes that the Dutch fly ;¹ the Ambassadors must wait, however, to know the truth for sure, till they can see the King, "who speaks always sincerely." They meet him at his palace, and hear that seventeen Dutch men-of-war have been taken, and nine burnt or sunk. The English have lost the Earls of "Falmuth, Portlan, and Malborout," besides "M. de Mousseri, Irlandois."² The hostile fleet has been scattered to the winds and the waters ; maybe they will congregate again.

"M. de Witt," Courtin observes with strange foresight, "has such a strong will as to want another battle. He will perhaps be torn to pieces by his own people."³ The bloody tragedy foreshadowed in this last sentence was, however, to be delayed till Saturday, 20th of August, 1672, when the Grand Pensionary was massacred by his compatriots, and a finger torn from his body "sold for two sous and a pot of beer."⁴

Great were the rejoicings in London at the news of the victory of the Duke of York off the Suffolk coast, the blowing up of Obdam's ship, and the flight of the Dutch. Bonfires were lighted in the streets. Owing to their capacity as mediators, the French Envoys considered they had to abstain from taking part in them, which angered the mob very much ; they were accordingly hooted each in turn, and their windows

¹ Courtin to Lionne. June 15, 1665.

² The Three to the King. June 18, 1665.

³ To Lionne. June 22, 1665.

⁴ A. Lefèvre Pontalis, "Jean de Witt," Paris, 1884, 2 vols., 8vo., vol. ii. p. 537.

broken. But while any breach of etiquette by officials was resented to the extent, as we have seen, of bringing nations to the verge of war, the doings of mobs were, not unwisely, esteemed as of little import. Cominges had taken almost no notice of a former *émeute* before his house. The *émeute* had been caused by a servant belonging to the Exeter family knocking a shop boy on the head with his sword. The mob assembled; the servant withdrew into the Ambassadorial courtyard, where he was covered by the diplomatic immunity. Cominges's men helped the fellow to escape by a side door, while the rabble clamoured for him to be surrendered; when they heard he had fled they broke Cominges's windows. "The noise reached me when I had already ordered my coach, meaning to go out. I walked at once towards the mob, which allowed me to pass; I ordered all my men to withdraw, and caused the door to be shut; I had then my drive in the town as I had resolved, with only one gentleman and a page. So the rabble dispersed, the asylum was not violated, and my person was not insulted."¹

"I am very glad," Louis answered, "you could put an end to that fray without more trouble . . . Incidents of this kind are such that no human wisdom can foresee them. I greatly approve your presenting yourself to the mob (thanks to which the tumult was quieted) and your driving with one gentleman and a page as you had resolved before."²

¹ To the King. March 15, 1663.

² March 25, 1663. D'Estrades too (letter to Brienne the younger, October 6, 1661) had had the excitement of similar encounters. A Swedish baron pursued by the police having taken

It is strange to compare the tone of the dispatches concerning the Watteville affair and the letters in which the Ambassadors report such frays as the above, or, again, give an account of the siege laid to their houses on the occasion of the victory.

The first part of the night had been spent very gaily but quietly : "At the moment I am writing, Monseigneur, that is, about eleven of the night," says Secretary Bigorre, "I hear on all sides the shouts of the people who flock in large numbers round the bonfires in the streets. Coming home from Messrs. de Cominges and Courtin, to whom I had brought dispatches for them to sign, I saw a number of fires which were being prepared. At the door of wealthy persons there was no less than a full cartload of wood for each single fire ; those who lack wood burn their old chairs and old chests. . . . A standard taken from the Dutch has been placed on the top of the Tower ; the Westminster bells have been ringing as a sign of rejoicing." ¹

Later in the night things altered : "It was one after midnight, that is to say a time when the rabble had drunk abundantly," when the absence of bonfires at the doors of the French Ambassadors, "whose houses were in the middle of the town," was noticed by the mob. The rabble insisted upon fires being lighted, and obtaining none they showed their displeasure, as usual, by breaking the windows. "My tale will be short," writes Courtin

shelter in the house of d'Estrades at Chelsea, while he himself was away hunting, a fight took place between the police force and the servants of the Embassy, eight of these being wounded, while two of the mob were killed.

¹ Bigorre to Lionne. June 18, 1665.

to Lionne. "I have had a dozen glass panes broken in the room occupied by your son. M. de Cominges has been less lucky, and if we had not kept our temper well you would have heard of a fine grilling of Ambassadors, for the streets were full of ready burning coals." ¹

"If I were not afraid of Fame," writes on his part classical Cominges, "of Fame that is wont to magnify things, I would not even mention what has taken place. But you will know, sir, and I hope forget a minute after, that, in order that nothing should be done contrary to our quality and obligations as mediators, I ordered my people not to light fires before my door, but to give wood to my neighbours if they wanted any to increase their own fires. Whether the thing passed unobserved at first, or that the fumes of the wine had not yet turned their heads, certain it is that I remained untroubled till midnight. But shortly after, it seemed proper to a multitude of roughs, who evidently considered that they had no better way of showing their patriotism and their hatred towards France, to shower on my house first execrations of the usual type, then stones in such a number that I had to leave my bedroom to avoid being wounded in so fine an encounter. My people, brave as chained lions, were moved by so much insolence; they instantly armed themselves each according to his profession: spits stood at the vanguard, pistols and muskets composed the main body of the troops. Things having come to this, I thought it advisable to cool so much military ardour. I addressed them in a speech returning thanks, and I ordered my army to withdraw. . . .

"The foes, availing themselves of my prudence, which

¹ June 22, 1665.

they interpreted as weakness, marked all the entrances to my house with a number of white crosses and inscriptions meaning, 'May the pity and misericord of God be on this poor house,' as if the plague were in it, and its inhabitants had been destroyed. They withdrew then in their turn with much hooting." ¹

With a nation thus disposed, little could be hoped from a negotiation, and the abundant stores of fine phrases and assurances with which the instructions provided the Ambassadors would be of little avail. Courtin, a shrewd, practical man, for all his jollity, could not help sneering at those treasures: a much more effectual argument would have been a public declaration that Louis would, according to the Treaty of 1662, help the Dutch with his troops and money; and even this, Courtin thought, would be barely sufficient to quiet now the passions of the people. As for the fine talk with which the Ambassadors were expected by the men at home to alter the bend and will of a great nation, he takes the liberty to write plainly to Lionne:

"So long as I see that we and M. Van Gogh are possessed of nothing better than certain common places from which to draw fine words to persuade the King of England—to whom we have by order delivered three or four times over the same compliment—I will believe that you laugh in your sleeve when for your sins and out of sheer courtesy you feel bound to write to us. You will allow me to say in justice to you, that you are far too enlightened not to know as well as I do that the King of England, were he accessible to all the fine things you have so delicately moulded in our

¹ To Lionne. June 22, 1665.

instructions, and in two or three other dispatches, would be quite unable to follow the promptings of his heart, dependent as he is upon his Parliament and his people. We must therefore examine whether testimonies of tenderness on the part of our master, his prayers, and our instant recommendations, can make some impression on the Parliament of England and on the inhabitants of London: that you will not readily believe." ¹ Charles "can nothing except when he wills what his subjects want." ² Courtin is sorry to be only thirty-eight; if he had the authority which age gives he would quietly go beyond his instructions. "I would take resolutions and act upon them, and let you know only afterwards." Even in those pre-telegraphic times, Ambassadors, as we see, felt not a little the impediment of too strict instructions. As things stand, and as the task is hopeless, Courtin resolves at least to make the best of his stay among the English, and if he cannot be useful he means at least not to be bored, and he will mix more and more with the gay world. "As soon as I have done with my cough, I will live as Ministers of State do in this country, and, to begin, I have this very morning named to the King of England the person who has touched my heart; he has already come to my help and interposed his good offices in my favour." ³

II. *Amusements.*

The amusements of the English Court were famous all over Europe, and the additional Ambassadors sent

¹ June 29, 1665.

² July 6, 1665.

³ To Lionne. June 8, 1665.

to reinforce Cominges did not fail to turn the occasion to account. They soon became acquainted with the Stewart, the Castlemaine, and the other ladies who played a part at Court, with the former especially, whose favour was in the ascendant, and who was not averse to France. They report with pleasure that the Castlemaine who favours Spain is running great risks: "She has refused to sleep at Hampton Court under pretence that her apartments are not ready. His Britannic Majesty supped yesterday with Mlle. Stewart at Milord Arlington's, who had his mistress with him. A Madame Scrope she is, first lady of the chamber to the Queen, and a woman not to content herself with a mere Secretary of State. For you must know, sir, that ladies are not to be won by fine dispatches, such as you draw every day. . . . But to come back, Madame de Castlemaine runs great risks, and if her anger lasts she may well lose the finest rose on her hat. This comparison is allowable in a country where all women wear such."¹

Hostile as they were bound to be towards Spain, the three, none the less, entertained agreeable relations with the Ambassador of his Catholic Majesty, Count de Molina. They dined at his house, where a famous cook prepared extraordinary Spanish dainties. "The cheer is excellent, but Spanish fashion; ollas make the first course, fruit the second, and roast the third. He has a butler who knows how to make a liquid blanc-mange that is greatly esteemed, and is drunk as lemonade."²

¹ Courtin to Lionne. July 16, 1665.

² Bigorre to Lionne. July 6, 1665.

In such festivities, whether challenged by Monk or not, our Ambassadors were in danger of losing their heads somewhat. Drinking was a sport, and the first of sports. A good drinker was held in as high esteem as a good player at any fashionable game is held now : "Pray excuse my style," Courtin quietly says, "I have been writing all the night, and I drank more than I ought."¹ Servants not unnaturally followed the example of their masters, and as they had not the drinking capacities of "the General" some little inconveniences sometimes ensued. The same Molina gives a supper one Monday "to Madame de Castlemaine and to a number of Englishmen and ladies. There was a great feast. But his servants having allowed too much liquor to the coachmen and lackeys, they happened to be all drunk when there was a question of going. Their masters and mistresses having noticed it, would not be driven by men in that state, and borrowed from the Spanish Ambassador his own coachmen and postilions. But as some little capacity to understand was left to a few of the others, they became aware of the slight put upon them. They stood up to prevent it, and a free fight ensued with the servants of M. de Molina. This created the greatest and most amusing disturbance imaginable."²

Being famous for its elegance and its gaiety, the English Court was then a place of resort for fashionable people of all countries. They were very well received there, were they men or women, Gramonts or Duchesses Mazarin. Lionne, who felt his eldest son

¹ Courtin to Lionne. May 24, 1665.

² Bigorre to Lionne. July 9, 1665.

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MISS JENNINGS

From the picture by Verelst formerly at Ditton Park

was lacking in some of that varnish the recipe for which Chesterfield was to lay down in later years, accepted Courtin's offer, and allowed young "Marquis de Berni" to follow the Ambassador to England. The Marquis was then only nineteen ; he was still very *gauche* and slow. London was, not without reason, considered the place where he would lose his shyness. He was therefore permitted to stay there, very much in the same manner as Chesterfield wanted his son in the next century to live in France, in order to see the world, to improve his conversation, and to rub off his timidity. Very curious it is to see with what sort of fatherly care Courtin and Cominges watched the young man's successes. Their letters on the subject read very much like Chesterfield's ; the difference of time and place is scarcely perceptible : so true to itself from the beginning to the end was the worldly wisdom of "l'ancien régime."

"Your son," Courtin writes, "begins as honest men do ; he is a little abashed ; but we have given him courage, and Mr. d'Irval [?] has so well seconded him that he has at length"—he had been a month in London—"made his declaration. It has been very well received by one of the finest girls in England : Mlle. Genins (Jennings), of the household of the Duchess of York. She is small, but with a fine figure, a splendid complexion, the hair such as you remember Madame de Longueville's was, brilliant keen eyes, the whitest and smoothest skin I ever saw. The Duchess, who is generally severe on such things, finds the two so well suited that she is the first to favour them. The Queen-mother, the King, all the Court, act accordingly.

People laugh, but I assure you the thing goes on well, and you must feel no anxiety about it ; for you may readily believe that I would put, as the word is, *les holas*, if I saw our cavalier go beyond what he should. But his intrigue is exactly at the point where it must be, to make him a man of the world (*honnête homme*), and I will let you know how it progresses." ¹

It progresses very well ; young Lionne arranges to see his lady every day ; he sends her strawberries every evening ; he wants, for good reasons, to follow the Duchess of York wherever she goes ; and Courtin has soon to moderate him.² He tries to turn him to sterner duties, viz., the drawing of dispatches, the scheme for which is supplied to him. One such, the object of which is to inform d'Estrades at the Hague of all that goes on, is several times alluded to ; several times, because it is never finished. M. le Marquis has been ordered to do it ; he will do it, this day, or rather to-morrow ; it is not quite finished yet ; he will work at it again by and by : so Ambassadors write from day to day. D'Estrades luckily had other sources of information. " I tell him all the truths I find necessary for him to know ; and I am not content with treating with him all the questions which seem to me of greater import, but I ask M. de Cominges to help me. We have sometimes to contend with his timidity, and sometimes with his presumption ; very often with his sloth, but above all with his vanity, which is fed by all the

¹ May 24, 1665.

² The young man has also to be moderated in another way. Cominges draws a mournful picture of Berni's sickness after he had eaten too much cream. April 23, 1665.

honours paid to him. I think you would do well to destine him to the *robe* (to a judicial career). He will then stay among people who, having no ambition to rise at Court, will live with him in greater familiarity, and will remove from his mind what comes into it by reason of honours rendered to him and meant for you.”¹

Cominges, on his side, notices that since he is in love with Miss Jennings he displays “more ease in his conversation, a greater care of his person, less shyness in society. I hope that this voyage will have improved him, and that you will find changes which will please you. You are, it is true, a severe judge, and you expect perfection in an age when reason scarcely begins to bud.”

As a sign that the teaching imparted to him was not thrown away, young Lionne, to the great admiration of his mentors, began to pretend he was not in love with Miss Jennings only, and to act accordingly. Quite Chesterfieldian is Courtin’s letter on this youthful feat ; the respective merits of youth and age are there compared as follows : “Your son has become faithless. The King of England has discovered it. The truth is he felt the point of what we said, and would not be suspected of being such a man as to overstep bounds. On this score, therefore, there is nothing to fear. The pity is that he pretends he can love only young ladies ; people of his age must, however, be instructed by old ones, who cure them of the bashfulness which makes them mute and prevents them from daring anything.”²

¹ Courtin to Lionne. May 28, 1665.

² Courtin to Lionne. June 8, 1665.

"Women of fashion," writes Chesterfield—"I do not mean absolutely unblemished—are a necessary ingredient in the composition of good society. . . . In company every woman . . . must be addressed with respect ; nay, more, with flattery, and you need not fear to make it too strong. Such flattery is not mean on your part nor pernicious to them, for it can never give them a greater opinion of their beauty or their sense than they had before. Do not forget to pay your court to the older ones, for if you do they never forgive it ; and I could suppose cases in which you could desire their friendship, or at least their neutrality." ¹

Thus wrote, in the eighteenth century, godfathers to godsons, godson being in this case "*ætatis suæ*," *ten*.

A truer truth than Courtin's statement above is disclosed in a later dispatch in which the Ambassador confesses that the sham love-making of young Lionne to "Mistris Bointon" (the Boynton of Gramont's Memoirs, who had fainting-fits and was loved by Talbot) had for its cause a refusal of Miss Jennings (loved also by Talbot) to have her hands kissed.² The Boynton stratagem succeeds very well, and *petite Genins* has to surrender her hands. In fact the young Marquis de Berni remained faithful to the last—to the last of the three months he spent in England. With all his defects, he seems to have pleased everybody about him : "He will be greatly regretted at this Court, being, as he is, appreciated by the King and the Queens, and dearly loved by the prettiest young lady in England." ³ Do

¹ Oxford, 1890, p. 116.

² Courtin to Lionne. August 23, 1665.

³ The Three to Lionne. July 2, 1665.

not, added Courtin, "give him up on account of his youthful faults. If I spend the winter in Paris, I mean to *unfreeze* you two, and breed such close familiarity between you that you will take as much pleasure in teaching him as he will in being taught." ¹

One last letter on the subject of the young Marquis gives a curious side-light on the character and morals of the father, and very strange it seems at the present day that Lionne could leave such letters behind him to be preserved and bound at the French Foreign Office with the official correspondence concerning peace and war and treaties.

The Court has retired to Kingston ; the Marquis de Berni has been recalled to Paris, but he is remembered at Court : "Thursday evening, the King of England teased very much in my presence Mrs. 'Genins' on the subject of your son ; the young girl reddened ; she never appeared more beautiful. His Majesty told me that your son had asked M. Porter to let him know how she looked on the day he was gone ; and at the same time his Majesty assured me that he had never seen such a picture of sadness and desolation as the young gallant offered when on board the yacht of the Queen-mother. He was right, I can tell you, for the young lady loved him dearly, and if the one who reduced you to the taking of certain waters flavouring of turpentine had been as beautiful, your stomach would not have been easily restored to health. But I have what will give it a new vigour, and I wait only till Persod," the King's messenger, "comes back, to send to you two cakes of chocolate with which I have been

¹ July 9, 1665.

presented by the Spanish Ambassador.”¹ This chocolate is the best in the world, so good indeed that it puts to shame by comparison even “the one the recipe for which Madame de Lionne brought from Madrid.”²

Lionne thereupon writes to have more particulars, not about Miss Jennings at all, but about this curious dainty, chocolate. How is it to be prepared? Lionne seems to have laboured under the delusion that eggs ought to be mixed with it. Courtin answers: “I am not quite sure as to the way it ought to be managed; I think, however, I have heard it said that eggs were not to be added.” The true recipe is then secured from his Spanish Excellency, and dictated by Courtin to Secretary Bigorre for the benefit of Louis’s Minister: “I have written under dictation the following lines, without either adding or omitting a word: ‘You must first have the water to boil, and then mix it with the chocolate and sugar, and not place it again on the fire.’”³ The same recipe, “without addition or omission,” is to be read to this day on the boxes of all the varieties of our cocoas and cocoatinas.

III. *The fogs and plague.*

While the Ambassadors were talking chocolate, a change had come over the capital; signs of mourning

¹ July 27, 1665.

² July 16, 1665. Madame de Lionne (Paule Payen) was “une femme de beaucoup d’esprit, de hauteur, de magnificence et de dépense. Elle avait tout mangé et vivait dans la dernière indigence et la même hauteur” (St. Simon).

³ Bigorre to Lionne. July 30, 1665.

were to be seen everywhere ; the plague had made its appearance. "The plague besieges us on all sides," writes Courtin in June, "and if nothing happens the Court will leave town as soon as the Queen-mother is gone. M. de Verneuil intends to keep very few people with him, and to send back the others to France. Tell me what I should do. I have forty persons with me, and I dare not leave any in London on account of the increasing pestilence."¹

Great was the bustle and trouble in all the Embassies, provided then with an army of servants and an immense quantity of horses, carriages, and impediments of all sorts. The three French envoys were the more displeased at this ill-timed occurrence, as they had already suffered from the English climate, and were in a weak state. The fog-complaint is not a recent one ; it was then as strong as it is now ; it dates back in fact—an ominous fact—from the time of Pytheas : in the few lines preserved of this earliest traveller to Britain mention is made of the remarkable fogs of the country. They cannot be said to have become since unworthy of their fame, and Pytheas's testimony is there to show that it rests on a more solid basis than the smoke of the sea-coal. They are, in fact, a national thing, inherent to the soil, *adscripti glebæ*, and not to be removed by acts of Parliament. Parliament tried, however, being, according to the best authorities, according to Cominges himself, "all-powerful." Yesterday's attempts are not the first ; means were devised even in Stuart times to

¹ To Lionne. June 18, 1665. So early as the 17th of March, 1664, Cominges had written to Lionne : "Il s'est trouvé deux maisons infectées de la peste dans Londres."

devise some abatement. Evelyn was one of those reformers, and he notes in his Diary that he had an important conversation with Charles the Second on the subject. The King "was pleased to discourse to me about my book inveighing against the smoke of London, and proposing expedients how, by reforming those particulars I mentioned, it might be reformed ; commanding me to prepare a bill against the next session of Parliament, being, as he said, resolved to have something done in it." ¹ The book was called "Fumifugium," but it does not seem to have attained the object its title implied. It was printed with a dedication to His Majesty, and published "by his special commands." Both the King and diarist forgot when so doing the hope-forbidding testimony of Pytheas.

In the meantime, Ambassadors coughed, sneezed and nearly died. Cominges, we saw, had been once given up, and remained an invalid, or nearly so. Courtin had no sooner settled in London than he was seized with a bad cough ; he is loud in his complaints against the fumes and smoke of the town and the "vapeurs du charbon de terre." ² He gives an appalling account of the effect of the climate on the members of "la célèbre ambassade." He writes to Lionne : "When there will be a question of again filling the post of Ambassador to England, the King will do well to cast his eyes on some broad-shouldered person. For M. de Verneuil is in a very sorry state ; M. de Cominges has a chronic rheum which will follow him to his grave or till he goes back to France ; and as for me, who have not a strong chest,

¹ Under date September 13, and October 1, 1661.

² To Lionne. June 11, 1665.





LE DUC DE VERNEUIL

Ambassador to England 1665

From the engraving by Michel Lasne

"Ad vivum, 1661"

I have lost my voice these four or five days ; I feel a fire in my stomach and a pain in my side ; I am becoming nervous.”¹

The state of the old Duke de Verneuil was even more to be pitied. The change in his habits, and in his usual surroundings, and the rigour of the climate were too much for him ; he fell all at once into a melancholy, and no sooner arrived than he wanted to go back. Instead of cheering him, his men made him worse, and showed a sorrier face than even his : “ They have the look of men that are to be marched to the scaffold, and whenever I call they ask me when it is we go.”² Something must be done, else he will die ; he must be allowed to return. Courtin keeps in better spirits though rather affected. “ I have made it a point,” he says, “ not to die in London, and I do not mean to follow the example of poor M. de Verneuil, whose mind is more broken than his body. We do all we can, M. de Cominges and myself, to strengthen him, and we are right, for we shall never be associated with a more easy-going colleague. But our eloquence is now all spent, and if you do not send us some of those noble lords (*grands seigneurs*), who pace for eight or nine hours each day the courtyard of the old castle at St. Germain, French travellers will be one day shown the tomb of M. de Verneuil in Westminster Abbey.”³

¹ June 4, 1665. Ambassadors of a later date write in the same strain : “ *Tout ce que je désirerais serait que le brouillard, l'air et la fumée ne me prissent pas si fort à la gorge.*” Duc d'Aumont to Marquis de Torcy, January 19, 1713.

² Courtin to Lionne. June, 1665.

³ Courtin to Lionne. July 2, 1665. He goes on suggesting that the Duc de Chaulnes might be sent to replace Verneuil.

The old gentleman had, luckily, one saving quality in fighting depression : he was, as Evelyn noticed, a great hunter. He does not seem at first to have taken kindly to English dogs and horses ; but at length he came to like them very much, the dogs especially.¹ We find him at "Neumarquet," a place where "the stables are all wainscotted and sculptured, and where horses are fed with new-laid eggs and Spanish wine. They are exercised daily."² He goes deer-stalking ; he purchases dogs, gets into their familiarity, nay, their friendship ; a ray of happiness then lights on his path, he feels no longer alone, as when he had only Cominges and Courtin with him, and he no longer talks of going before the others. His dogs are a world and a family to him. But then there is the plague, and that is no trifle.

In July there was no more doubt that the epidemic would not be stamped out, and that the whole town would suffer. Precautions are taken, harsh, not to say ferocious, precautions — hopeless too. Innumerable quantities of houses are marked in earnest with those crosses which Cominges and Courtin had seen painted by derision over their own doors. Stringent orders are issued by the Lord Mayor for the shutting up of "visited" buildings, prescribing that every "house visited be marked with a red cross of a foot long, in the middle of the door," and "printed

¹ He had brought his French horses with him, to the number of *twenty-four*. See a pass for them, April 25, 1665. "Calendar of State papers (Domestic Series) of the reign of Charles II."

² Anonymous note of (about) the year 1687. "Correspondance d'Angleterre," vol. cxxxvii,

words, that is to say : ‘ Lord have mercy upon us,’ to be set close over the same cross until the lawful opening of the same house.”¹ Living and dying men and women were thus shut up together, until they were all healed or all dead. This visitation was the famous one described later by Defoe, and during which “ le nommé Miltonius ” retired to Chalfont, and there placed in the hands of his friend Ellwood the newly-completed manuscript of his “ Paradise Lost.”

Preparations are made for the removal of the Court ; the exodus begins with the Portuguese ecclesiastics belonging to the Queen. “ She has almost no Portuguese ladies with her, but she has for her chapel monks and priests of her own country, of whom there is not one who has not brought with him his father, mother, nephews, &c. Her Majesty has caused all the pack to be removed to Salisbury on account of the plague. They filled eight coaches.”²

The Ambassadors have to remain behind for a while, owing to the difficulty of accommodating them. They learn then by personal experience and with no small astonishment the truth of the saying as to an Englishman’s house being his own castle. The King’s officers go about the village of Kingston, near London, and mark certain houses in chalk, their owners being expected to lodge the Ambassadors ; the owners refuse, to the great dismay of Secretary Bigorre who had been sent beforehand to arrange matters. “ His Highness de Verneuil,” he writes to Lionne, “ having left London

¹ In the number of July 6, 1665, of the “ *Newes*, published for the satisfaction and information of the people.”

² Bigorre to Lionne, July 2, 1665.

this morning to come here, I have had the honour to accompany him, and I can now inform you, Monseigneur, of our arrival at 'Kinstawn.' Messrs. de Cominges and Courtin will arrive only to-morrow ; I doubt if even the last named will be able to leave the town so soon, great as is his danger on account of the plague. For a young fool, whose house had been appointed by the royal officer for Mr. Courtin's use, has removed the chalk with his own hands and asserts that he will suffer no one in his house. The same reception has been offered to the Ambassador of Spain. They do their best just now to curb those ill-conditioned minds to obedience, but to all appearances they will not easily succeed. You may gather from this, sir, that there is no occasion for calling the Kings of England *nimum reges*.

" There has been already discovered a visited house in this place, but H.B.M. has ordered all the contents to be removed and the rooms to be 'perfumed' with the utmost care. " ¹

Courtin must not remain inactive, and Bigorre beseeches him to bestir himself without loss of time not to let such an unpleasant precedent be established : " If you find it advisable, Monseigneur, to speak about this to the High Chamberlain, I think you will do well not only on your own account, but for the sake of all the Ambassadors generally ; for the Spanish Ambassador meets the same difficulties, and if this young mad-cap is not chastised, we shall have to indulge in a fight wherever we go on leaving this place, in order to secure lodgings. As for myself, Monseigneur, being a

¹ July 12, 1665.

Gascon, I do not mind fights, and I can assure your Excellency that you will always find me ready to shed for your sake the last drop of—my ink.”

This truly Gasconish letter is forwarded to Lionne by Courtin, who gives at the same time a graphic picture of the state of the great town. “You will see by M. Bigorre’s letter, which I have just received, in what state of perplexity is my Excellency. Here I am bound to stay some days more among a plague-stricken population. For when they will have discovered the ‘milord Chamberlain,’ who is in the country, his power will not prove strong enough to enable me to go and lodge at the house of an Englishman who is not inclined to admit me. I would feel quite disheartened as well for this stay among people so little addicted to civility, as for the beautiful negotiation I have to conduct—which, however, does not prevent you from letting four *ordinaires* go without your remembering so much as our being alive—if I had not been so lucky as to fall in with the *Amadis*. A good father Jesuit, who acts as my chaplain, has ranged all the booksellers’ shops in London to find them and he reads them with as much pleasure as myself.”¹

Thus kept in town by the stubbornness of English householders, with the valorous deeds of mighty *Amadis* to charm away the anxieties of the plague, Courtin, as well as Cominges who suffered the same inconveniences, was in the best possible situation to see and describe the plague-stricken capital. They were nearly alone, each in his house, having sent back most of their men to France and kept only those who were

¹ July 13, 1665.

strictly indispensable for their daily attendance, namely, twenty-three persons *each* :

“ I write to you from a desert, for so may be called the place where we are, that is the quarter where the Court stays when in town, as large nearly as the Faubourg St. Germain. About thirty thousand persons have left it during the last four days ; and yesterday we (M. de Cominges and I) met people with white rods, that is, people with the plague, walking in the streets. . . . We have sent back to France part of our apparel and of our servants, restricting ourselves to the number of only twenty-three each.” ¹

On the 16th of July we find, at last, the two safely established in Kingston, in the house of the rebellious householder, whose door has been again marked with the royal chalk, and whose “ *accueil* ” to his guests the Ambassadors allow to remain undescribed.

But the plague progresses and makes its appearance in the suburbs of the town ; Kingston begins to be infected ; a house near the one occupied by Courtin and Cominges has been shut up on account of a case happening there. The Court will probably move one league further, and the royal officers are again sent beforehand to provide lodgings ; they experience exactly the same difficulties as before : “ We have sent, each of us, one of our servants with the quartermasters of the King, and they have told us that these officers did not dare to chalk the doors on account of the owners declaring openly that they would allow no one in their rooms on any consideration whatever. Such

¹ To Lionne. July 13, 1665.

language can be indulged in with impunity in this country." ¹

In this same month of July, the plague has done one thing it had not dared to do as yet : it has begun to attack "les honnêtes gens." Up to the 9th of the month people in society had been preserved, and, on the 6th, Secretary Bigorre could still write to Lionne : "The plague is not so contagious here as it is in the warm countries ; for in the streets where four or five houses are shut, one is allowed to talk with the plague-stricken persons who open their windows ; and people walk in the said streets as if nothing was the matter. It is believed that the air has not been corrupted as yet ; no person of condition, no one even of the middle class, has been attacked till now." ²

But things alter rapidly, and only yesterday the "wife of a milord" did die.³ At the beginning of August there are nearly three thousand deaths per week in London, the average number being only three hundred in ordinary times ;⁴ a Lifeguard is seized with the disease in the castle of Hampton Court. This last occurrence is no small matter, and a proclamation is immediately issued and read to the troops, ordering "that all and any soldiers who may fall sick of the plague are to declare it at once under pain of being shot. All this will make our negotiation a charming business ; possibly stopped against our will ; for if one of our servants is seized with the plague we shall

¹ The Three to Lionne. July 26, 1665.

² To Lionne. July 6, 1665.

³ Courtin to Lionne. July 9, 1665.

⁴ Bigorre to Lionne. July 9, 1665.

have to move away ; in which case it is a matter of doubt whether we shall find shelter in this land.”¹ An order to the same effect is issued to the naval troops. Walking in the country has ceased to be the quiet, healthy sport it used to be, greatly to the regret of Verneuil, who found more pleasure in it and in his dogs than in reading *Amadis* with Courtin, or *Plato* with Cominges : “ All the villages round Hampton Court are infected, and I found yesterday, I, the Duke de Verneuil, while having my walk along the main road, the body of a man who had just died of the plague.”²

No question but the Court must move further, and Salisbury is chosen as an appropriate place. The camp is raised ; there is again great bustle and precipitation, and great difficulties in providing carts and coaches. Cartmen want forty francs for each seven leagues, and yet the carts are not to be well filled, but remain half loaded. People must, however, go ; Court and Embassies in a procession ; and they do go. This affords to the Envoys an opportunity of seeing the English country. They saw it a century before the extraordinary increase of the population—extraordinary in its rapidity—had taken place ; they are struck at the sparsely-inhabited appearance of the parts they travel across. “ I was surprised to see so few villages in a distance of thirty leagues of very fine land ; though it is reaping-time very few people are seen working in the fields ; very few are met on the roads. We have passed three towns, two of which are named among the large ones of England, and are episcopal sees ; but they are very far from bearing

¹ Courtin to Lionne. August 6, 1665.

² The Three to Lionne. August 9, 1665.

comparison for their area, number of population, strength of construction with St. Denis. All the others in this kingdom (except London, York, and Bristol) are no better. The common people live comfortably enough because they pay nothing when the State has no war, and because the land produces an abundance of food. But the inhabitants of the country and of towns not by the sea-side have no cash. They are not numerous, the cause for which is that the colonies in the West Indies, the English settlements in Ireland, the pressing of men for the navy absorb a large quantity of people.”¹

They reach Salisbury, where they have the pleasure of seeing the famous cathedral, adorned with “as many pillars as there are hours in the year, as many windows as days, as many doors as weeks;”² and they regret to learn that the plague has made no less speed than themselves and has reached town at the same time as they. One of the royal grooms has already been seized with the disease, and “he has been ordered to be shut in, as well as all the others who live in the same house, which is a very good plan to kill them all.”³ Though the gates and avenues of the town are well watched, a man with the plague has come in—“He has for two days held intercourse with all sorts of people, and at length, the day before yesterday, he fell stark dead in the middle of the street, two hundred paces from the house of the King of England. A tent under which he had taken shelter has been burnt, and a house in which he had slept has been shut, with the people who

¹ Courtin to Lionne. August 15, 1665.

² Bigorre to Lionne. August 15, 1665.

³ Courtin to Lionne. August 19, 1665.

were in it, being nine servants of the Spanish Ambassador." The Spanish Ambassador, whose carriages are shut too, is reported excessively angry.¹

Verneuil alone feels better. He has immense plains before him to ride on, and dogs numberless to talk to. "He has a *meute* of his own with which he catches deer."² Cominges and Courtin, followed or no by their Amadis and Plato, enjoy life much less. "Cominges is up only four hours each day, and feeds upon fish only. As for myself," adds Courtin, who did not feel at all inclined to serve as a "fascine" to the policy of his friend Lionne, "though only 38, I risk more, I am sure, than any of the others. I wish I were with you in the new house of M. le Commandeur de Souvré, where I would swallow his potages with a greater relish than I take the preservatives Madame de Sablé has sent to me."³

The sadness of the days is scarcely relieved by the frolics of the ladies of the Court, who, true, however, to themselves, continue to play bowls, "which is one of the great amusements of this country,"⁴ to dress with elegance, to be courted, and to be very pretty. La Belle Stewart and la petite Jennings shine as usual amongst all the others; they have extraordinary dreams, which they tell reddening;⁵ but this is a brief amusement, and the news from London comes each day worse and worse: now there are 6,000 deaths per week, and now 8,250.

¹ Bigorre to Lionne. August 21, 1665.

² Same letter.

³ To Lionne. August 21, 1665.

⁴ The Three to Lionne. September 20, 1665.

⁵ Courtin to Lionne. August 23, 1665.

Salisbury is less and less a place of safety. "Another man died this morning in the street; an unpleasant custom which begins to spread."¹ The Spanish Ambassador's servants were about to be set free after *eighteen* days claustration, when a woman who had washed the linen of the original sick man dies in the house, and claustration begins afresh. Count de Molina's indignation becomes too strong for words: he was again to be deprived for an unlimited period of his "liquid blancmange that could be drunk as lemonade."

At length, the force of the epidemic being spent, some better tidings arrive from the capital; in October there is a great diminution in the number of deaths; at the beginning of November the rate has fallen to 3,300 per week, and later in the month to 1,800; people begin to go back to town.

One of the effects of this better news was to hasten the failure of the French Ambassadors' negotiation.

IV. *The end of the negotiation.*

All this while, and as much as circumstances permitted, the three Ambassadors had renewed their remonstrances, declarations, and deprecations. They had continued to see King and Chancellor, to deliver fine speeches to the Duke of York, and to do all they could to propitiate the ladies of the Court. For this object the Spanish Ambassador spent much money; but they only offer "incense," a commodity which had been enough till then with Mlle. Stewart: "I assure you I am

¹ Courtin to Lionne. August 30, 1665.

on better terms with her than Count de Molina is with Madame de Castlemaine,"¹ though Molina spends large sums of money. The Spaniard has "what to feed friendships with, and he acts according to the principles in Philippe de Comines's memoirs."² The unpopularity of the French is on the increase, and Englishmen in the streets have entirely ceased to take off their hats to the French Envoys.³ Louis is expected by his brother of Great Britain, if he means to remain on terms of friendship with England, to stop the Dutch, instead of threatening to help them (as he was bound to do by his Treaty of 1662). He owes no less, Charles pretends, to a King at feud with a mere Republic: "Vous le devez à la Royauté contre la République."⁴

In October, Parliament meets at Oxford; the Court and the Ambassadors go there, where they are again followed by the plague. Violent speeches are delivered; the nation is more and more inclined to war. The Duke of York proves intractable. Being intreated to show some conciliatory dispositions, "he answered that he would always see us with pleasure, but as for changing his opinion, *that* he would not; being, as he said, an Englishman, and therefore stubbornness itself.

"'But you are French on one side,' we answered. 'It is just you would make some allowance for that.'

"'Gentlemen', he replied, 'it is true. But know you that the English are obstinate when they are in the right; and when they are in the wrong, then the French

¹ Courtin to Lionne. July 9, 1665.

² Courtin to Lionne. July 9, 1665.

³ Same dispatch.

⁴ The Three to Louis. July 23, 1665.

have all reason to be obstinate too. Do not, therefore, expect anything from me.'

"Thereupon he left the room and went to prayers."¹

The English Envoys abroad were similarly disposed. Sir George Downing, who was to give his name later to a street famous ever since in the annals of diplomacy, was doing all he could at the Hague to prevent a peaceful arrangement. Holles, on his part, was sending from Paris the most consoling news of the weakness and maladministration of the kingdom : France, he considered, had never been in a worse state ; "the distractions and discontents and unpreparedness here :—never fewer forces on foot in France than now ;—never people of all sorts—souldiers, gentry, clergy, merchants, and all generally—more unsatisfied ; the Protestant party, which is a considerable one, desperate ; all their allies displeased with them." They are perfectly isolated in Europe, everybody is against them, and they stand a ready prey. "I doe not know that ever it could be better for us and worse for them than it is at this instant."² In this way are Ambassadors' judgments sometimes obscured when their coach has been stopped in the street, and when they have not been called your Excellency by Secretaries of State.

The three in England, be it said to their praise, however ill received by stubborn householders, gave proof of a much clearer insight into the temper of the British nation and a better knowledge of what it could do. They never ceased to speak the exact truth : if left

¹ The Three to the King. October 13, 1665.

² To Arlington. October 28, 1665. Lister's "Life of Clarendon," 1838. Vol. iii. p. 414.

alone the Dutch will be worsted in the long run ; for "all the Englishmen have wedded the quarrel of the nation,"¹ and will carry the contest to the bitter end. They are more numerous ; they are as brave as can be ; the resources of their kingdom are ample ; besides, in such matters, one must always "bear in mind the opinion of Marshal de Gramont, who says that God scarcely ever fails to second the larger squadrons."² If Louis sides with the Dutch (which he has no choice now but to do) he must prepare for enthusiastic votes of the Parliament for men and money to sustain the quarrel against him, and for diplomatic intrigues all over Europe to group together the Powers against him : "Parliament will readily approve all treaties which will seem useful to ruin French projects. Your Majesty will do well, therefore, to watch with a greater care than ever all that will go on in foreign countries, where in the future all will conspire against your greatness, and where your plans will be more easily foiled."³ They seem, in fact, to foresee, *not* the instant, irremediable ruin of France expected by Holles for no better reason than that he was ill-humoured, but Temple's Triple Alliance, and later Eugène and Marlborough.

Van Gogh, the Dutch envoy, was still in London, for, though hostilities were carried on, diplomatic intercourse had not been broken. He beseeched daily

¹ "Les Anglais sont naturellement braves et [ils] ont, s'il faut ainsi parler, épousé tous les querelle de la nation." Courtin to Lionne, September 29, 1665.

² Courtin to Lionne. July 23, 1665.

³ The Three to the King. November 1, 1665

the French Ambassadors to declare themselves, to give up all hope of a peaceful arrangement, and to trust to the cleverness of the Saardam shipbuilders to put, in a few weeks, the French navy on a right footing. "He says that in other circumstances the States would be sorry for an increase of the power of your Majesty at sea; but that to-day they want it; that you have seamen enough, but you lack ships; that if you will put your hand to your purse and give an advance of six weeks to the shipbuilders of the village of 'Serdam,' they will build you thirty ships ready to put to sea in the spring."¹ The spirit of the English people has, in the meantime, risen to such a pitch that it is lucky for Van Gogh that his compatriots have been worsted again at sea (by Lord Sandwich); his life else would have been in danger.²

Courtin does not want to run the same risks for nothing, and he writes, half playfully, half seriously, to Lionne: "We await your orders with impatience, to know what will become of us. All the grace I beg of you is that, if you want to cast somebody to the dogs of this country, you reserve this honour for Mr. Dumas," a commercial representative of French merchants, "and preserve for the sake of his four children the life of a younger son of a poor family."³

¹ The Three to the King. November 1, 1665.

² Courtin to Lionne. October 13, 1665.

³ To Lionne. October 13, 1665. A very modern complaint is found in a dispatch of nearly the same date; the three regret not to receive more regularly and completely communication of the informations sent to the King by his other representatives, and especially by his agents in Holland, Sweden, and Denmark. November 1, 1665.

Events, all this while, follow upon events. The Bishop of Munster has sent troops against the Dutch, and Louis has sent some against the Bishop; Turenne is on the frontier; Philip the Fourth of Spain is dead, and his sickly child little likely to survive him long. One way or the other, by peaceful or warlike means, the Anglo-Dutch quarrel must be settled with speed, that all the attention and forces of the Sun-King may be concentrated on Spain and Spanish affairs. The Chancellor proves as obstinate as ever; he continues ill of the gout, and being addressed with a lengthy speech on the impending evils, answers only with a shake of his head, and a doleful expression, the meaning and cause of which the three doubt whether to attribute to the subject under discussion or to the gout. They go to the King; they find him in a more amiable mood, but with no answer to give; they go to the Duke, who has one: he wants war to be declared, and Louis may join the Dutch as much as he pleases. They see Arlington, and he, at last, places in their hands a note rejecting the last French proposals for an arrangement. Being asked for explanations, and having none to give, he "chooses to run away without returning any answer."¹

War will decide the quarrel.

¹ The three to the King. Oxford, November 8, 1665.

CHAPTER X.

HOME AGAIN.

WITH many compliments and bows the "célèbre Ambassade" had come, bringing, as they thought, peace ; with many compliments and bows they went back, leaving behind them war. The Parliament, the nation, the heir to the throne, the English envoys abroad, thirsted after war ; all the fine phrases of Lionne's composition, those beautiful phrases which were, according to Courtin, insufficient to conquer ladies, had proved equally inefficient against the strong will of the British nation. Nothing was left but to take leave. As they were coming from a pestilence-stricken country, they could not be allowed to go straight to Paris, and they would have to undergo the miseries of a quarantine, somewhere on the coast, in the depths of winter, now near at hand.

Letters were despatched to the authorities near the sea-shore for a proper place to be appointed to the royal Duke and his colleagues. The Duc de Montausier suggests, in answer, the islets of St. Marcou, near Bayeux. "It is true there are no lodgings there, except a small cabin where a grey friar lives in summer,

hermit-wise. *Ces Messieurs* would, therefore, be very badly accommodated." Sheds would, however, be constructed for their servants and horses.¹

This will not do. A more convenient place is found at Pandé, a little hamlet not far from Cayeux, near the mouth of the Somme ; and there the three are invited to go. No easy matter either, on account of the sands at the mouth of the river, which are particularly dangerous in winter. They write from London to beg that the Cayeux people be instructed to have their best pilots in readiness, and to keep watch till the Embassy comes ; but they especially request that they be allowed rather to land at Calais. They would also be very glad if they could learn that their quarantine will not be a very long one : " We hear that in the warm countries the quarantines never last longer than seventeen days. If, therefore, we land without accident and in good health, we hope the King will kindly allow us to slip towards Paris with one single valet de chambre each. . . . We do not know well what to do with ourselves, and I would fain say, with Don Bertrand, I would I were quit of it for two hundred stripes, and were at home again." ² But they had not the choice even of this rough alternative, and to the mouth of the Somme they were again peremptorily ordered to go.

Servants of theirs were at Dover all this while, trying to hire ships for their Excellencies' journey. But no master was found ready to run the risks, and the thing came to such a point that Barnier, their man, wrote

¹ Montausier to Lionne, November 16, 1665.

² Courtin to Lionne. November 25, 1665.

that an injunction from the King of England would be necessary. It is indispensable that a "warant" be obtained from the King allowing the Ambassadors to "prendre des vaisseaux par force." The three write rather to have ships sent over from France.

At length means are found, and the "célèbre Ambassade" is able to start on its home journey—not before they had had a last audience from the King, and received as parting gifts from his Majesty, according to custom, earrings, gold boxes, and other souvenirs. People on the road who had seen their coming were able to see the truth of their prophecy, according to which, if the Ambassadors meant peace, they might have as well stayed at home. Ten times better, they thought! with the risks of the sands and of the quarantine before them.

On Christmas Day, they are able to report their arrival. They are settled at Pandé, where they feel very cold and shivering, and they blow upon their fingers. Verneuil has lost his dogs, and is excessively sad and ill-humoured. The incidents of the journey are told by the three in one of their last collective dispatches. "All we fear now is the excessive cold which has set in these last two days, and which we keenly feel, being housed in a large building that has never been inhabited, and the inside of which has never been finished. We shall, however, not move from the limits assigned for our quarantine, and we had to-day mass said in this place without letting any of our men go to the village church. So, whatever may happen, we shall be chargeable with naught. Such being our arrangements, we shall await with patience

and in the most submissive spirit the orders of his Majesty, not without hope that the wind and frost having entirely purified our persons, an end will be put to our torments.

"An English corsair, notwithstanding the passports of the King of Great Britain, has seized a French ship whose master had been entrusted with the dogs of me, the Duc de Verneuil, and with one of my Swiss. This ship had left Dover the day before we started, a thing we succeeded in doing only after the third trial. In our first attempt our boat was nearly destroyed, as it ran against the pier and broke its quarter-deck." At the mouth of the Somme they had been very glad to find the Cayeux pilots, thanks to whose skill one only of their ships, and that one containing simply their equipages, ran aground.¹

In answer to this letter, and out of sympathy doubtless for the "ennui" they would feel in their seclusion, they were invited by Lionne to turn their empty hours to account by drawing reports on English affairs. To this piece of kindness Cominges feebly answers that he will do his best, but that he suffers so much from "vapeurs de la rate" that he cannot "write for more than a quarter of an hour without feeling giddy." As for Courtin, his only objection is the cold, but he will try and overcome that; he will "blow into his fingers and fulfil the order he has received."² His intention was at first to end his memoir with a series of portraits of the most notorious persons at the Court of England; but he thought the matter over twice, and, for fear of

¹ From Pandé. The Three to the King. December 25, 1665.

² January 6, 1666.

indiscretion, he considered it better to give his descriptions by word of mouth, and to reserve them for the ear only of his dear Lionne, when sitting "by his fire-side."¹

With such tasks before them—none being allotted to Verneuil, too mournful, we suppose, for the loss of his dogs to be able to think of anything else—the Ambassadors spent the time of their quarantine. They remained in good health, their servants did the same, and they were at last allowed to see the towers and spires of their beloved Paris. Cominges had again his beautiful Césonie in his arms; Courtin found his four children, and he could tell endless tales of his journey, of the plague, of the stubbornness of James and the fickleness of Charles, of the strange working of the Parliamentary machinery, of liquid blanc-mange and Spanish chocolate, to his attentive friend Lionne. Whether poor Verneuil ever met his dogs again, we know not.

What followed is a matter of history. The treaty of 1662 with the Dutch had to be fulfilled, and war was declared by France against England on the 16th of January, and by England against France on the 19th of February, 1666. Hostilities began; they were very severe between Holland and Great Britain, and much less so between France and England. Louis, with his usual adherence to his once-formed plans, managed so as not to render an alliance with England impossible for ever. While Ruyter was as earnest as could be, so much so as to perform his famous deed of sailing up the Thames, the forces of Louis did very little; peace was signed at Breda (July 16, 1667), where several of our friends,

¹ January 17, 1666.

namely, Courtin, Holles, and d'Estrades, met as plenipotentiaries. The negotiation for the treaty of union with Great Britain was resumed, or rather continued, not openly by Ambassadors, but secretly by Henrietta of England, Duchess of Orléans, who was at that time the real Ambassador of France to England and of England to France. The outcome of her efforts was the celebrated Treaty of Dover (1670), the consequences of which were to prove so baleful to the Stuart dynasty.

As for our heroes, each followed separately his own fate. Courtin was to continue, not without *éclat*, his diplomatic career, being in after time to fill the posts of Ambassador to Holland, to Sweden, and again to England ;¹ Verneuil to die an old man of over eighty, in his Château de Verneuil, in 1682. Young Lionne was not to marry at all his pretty *petite Genins*, but his cousin, Renée de Lionne. His father's attempts to make of him a man of the world were as fruitless as Chesterfield's for his own progeny ; he proved a confirmed ass, till, having injured his head with a fall, he became absolutely stupid and had to be "interdit." Miss Jennings married in succession two of the heroes of Gramont's Memoirs, first George Hamilton,² brother of the author of the same, then the notorious Talbot, so severely handled, not to say caricatured, by Macaulay in his "History" under his later name and title of Duke of Tyrconnel.

¹ He died in 1703, being then "Doyen du Conseil d'Etat." On his second Embassy to England, see Forneron, "Louise de Keroualle," Paris, 1886 ; translated into English by Mrs. Crawford. On his Swedish mission, see Mignet, "Succession d'Espagne," vol. ii.

² Made a Count in the French peerage and a Maréchal de Camp, and killed at the battle of Saverne.

Cominges survived only till 1670. In number thirty-eight of the *Gazette* of that year the following notice occurs: "The same day [March 25, 1670] Messire Gaston Jean Baptiste de Cominges, Knight of the Orders of the King, Lieutenant-Général in his Majesty's armies, Governor and Lieutenant-Général of the town, castle, and Sénéchaussée of Saumur, died here, in his hostel, aged 57, after having received the last sacraments with all the signs of the most sincere piety. He is deeply regretted in this Court, as well for the many qualities for which he was noticeable as for the great services rendered by him to the Crown, not only in the above-named functions, but also as an Ambassador extraordinary to England and to Portugal."

Cominges now sleeps in St. Roch's Church, Rue St. Honoré, beside Créqui, Le Nôtre, Mignard, and several other illustrious servants of the Grand Roi. As for "Césonie," she survived her husband, as well as the Précieuses group, many years, and she had long ceased to be "la belle Cominges" when she died in 1709.

THE END.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

ORIGINAL TEXT OF THE EXTRACTS FROM FRENCH DISPATCHES QUOTED IN THIS VOLUME.

THE extracts embodied in the preceding chapters, and of which we give here the French text, have been copied from the originals preserved at the French Foreign Office ; "Correspondance d'Angleterre," vols. lxxv. to lxxxviii. Most of them are published for the first time. It has not been considered proper to follow the changeable spelling of the secretaries to whom the dispatches were dictated ; modern orthography has been introduced throughout. All the extracts are dated according to the new style.

1. THE UNION WITH ENGLAND RECOMMENDED BY MAZARIN.—*Louis XIV. to Charles II., March 1, 1661.*—Je suis assuré que, pour l'amour de moi, et pour l'estime aussi et l'affection dont vous honoriez mondit cousin [le Cardinal Mazarin], vous donnerez quelques regrets à sa mémoire, et particulièrement quand vous saurez qu'un des conseils qu'il s'est le plus appliqué à me donner pendant ses dernières et plus douloureuses souffrances a été de m'ètreindre avec vous de la plus étroite amitié et union qui serait en mon pouvoir, et de rendre communs autant qu'il serait possible les intérêts de nos états.

2. ETIQUETTE.—*Instructions to d'Estrades, May 13, 1661.*—Après s'être assuré d'un logis commode, qui ait du rapport à la grandeur du maître qu'il sert et y être descendu inconnu . . . il est de son devoir qu'il fasse savoir au Secrétaire d'Etat ou au Maître des cérés-

monies qu'il est arrivé, à ce qu'ils aient à en donner part au Roi leur maître et faire préparer les choses nécessaires et accoutumées d'être mises en pratique à la réception d'un Ambassadeur du premier roi d'entre les chrétiens et renommé tel entre toutes les cours des autres rois et pays les plus éloignés.

3. PRECEDENCE.—*Instructions to d'Estrades, May 13, 1661.*—Le Sieur d'Estrades, en toutes rencontres, conservera les prééminences qui sont dues au roi, ne se souffrant précéder par aucun Ambassadeur que celui seul de l'Empereur, s'il en envoyait en Angleterre ; souffrira à sa gauche l'Ambassadeur d'Espagne, comme ceux de tous les rois qui ne relèvent leur couronne immédiatement que de Dieu. Mais pour ceux de Venise . . . il ne les souffrira que derrière lui.

4. THE ENGLISH PARLIAMENT.—*Instructions to d'Estrades, May 13, 1661.*—S. M. estime . . . qu'il est bon d'avertir le-dit Sieur d'Estrades que la monarchie d'Angleterre est composée de trois Royaumes dont les habitants diffèrent d'humeurs et d'inclinations, et ne conviennent qu'en une seule chose qui est de travailler avec application à diminuer en toute rencontre l'autorité royale et la rendre dépendante de celle de leurs Parlements qui sont les Etats généraux de chaque royaume et non pas un corps de justice comme celui-ci.

5. ASSISTANCE TO PORTUGAL.—*Louis to d'Estrades, July 16, 1661.*—Cette Lettre sera déchiffrée par M. le Comte d'Estrades même.—Il fut . . . considéré . . . que les oppositions et les traverses que les Espagnols par l'entremise de l'Empereur apportaient au dessein que j'ai de tacher de faire tomber la couronne de Pologne dans ma famille étaient une contravention formelle à l'article du traité de paix qui porte que les deux rois, comme bons frères, procureront sincèrement de tout leur pouvoir les avantages l'un de l'autre ; et qu'ainsi je n'étais pas plus obligé à concourir de bonne foi à redonner au Roi catholique mon frère la couronne de Portugal que lui à faire tomber dans ma maison celle de Pologne.

6. LOUIS XIV. AT WORK.—*Lionne to d'Estrades, Aug. 5, 1661.*—Ceux qui ont cru que notre maître se laisserait bientôt des affaires

se sont bien abusés, puisque plus nous allons en avant et plus il prend de plaisir à s'y appliquer et à s'y donner tout entier. Vous en trouverez une preuve bien convaincante dans la dépêche que je vous adresse ci-jointe, où vous verrez la résolution que S. M. a prise de répondre elle même à toutes les lettres de ses Ambassadeurs sur les affaires les plus importantes et les plus secrètes. . . . C'est une pensée qui lui est venue de son propre mouvement, et vous jugez bien que personne n'aurait été assez hardi pour oser lui proposer de se donner une si grande peine. . . . Voilà comme se forment les grands Rois, et je ne sais si depuis que la France est monarchie, il y a eu aucun Roi qui ait voulu prendre sur soi un aussi grand travail, ni plus utile, soit pour la personne du Roi même, ou pour le bien et la gloire de ses sujets et de son Etat.

La chose se passe de cette sorte : j'ai l'honneur de lui lire les dépêches plus secrètes qui lui sont adressées par ma voie, après qu'elles ont été déchiffrées. Il me fait après l'honneur de m'appeler pour me dire ses intentions pour la réponse à la quelle je travaille sous lui en sa présence, article par article, et S. M. me corrigeant quand je ne suis pas bien précisément sa pensée : En quoi sans flatterie ni exagération, je vous proteste que j'apprends plus que je ne me trouve capable de l'instruire. La dépêche étant formée, je prends soin de la faire mettre en chiffres, et ai l'honneur de la lui présenter ensuite à signer, ce qu'il fait de sa propre main et non d'une main empruntée, comme il est accoutumé chez Mrs. les Secrétaires d'Etat.

7. THE COMING OF VENETIAN AMBASSADORS.—*Louis to d'Estrades, Aug. 12, 1661.*—J'avoue qu'après ce que vous m'aviez mandé par vos précédentes [dépêches] sur le sujet de l'entrée des Ambassadeurs extraordinaires de Venise dans Londres, et sur les préparatifs que vous faisiez pour maintenir en ce rencontre là les prérogatives dues à ma couronne par dessus toutes les autres, il ne m'aurait pu tomber dans l'esprit que cette affaire là dut se passer et finir comme j'apprends qu'elle a fait. Je ne vous célerai pas que j'ai été fort touché de deux choses : l'une que le Roi mon frère se soit mêlé là dedans, sans nécessité, assez désobligeamment, puisqu'il semble avoir voulu décider une entière égalité entre moi et mon frère le Roi catholique, quoi qu'il ne put ignorer par combien de raisons la prééminence m'appartient, et que j'en suis de tout temps et en

tous lieux en possession. L'autre, que vous ayez déferé à ce qu'il vous a envoyé dire, n'ayant même été qu'une prière de sa part, de n'envoyer pas vos carrosses, vu que, quand même c'aurait été un ordre exprès, comme il lui est libre de les donner tels qu'il veut dans son Etat, vous auriez dû lui répondre que vous n'en recevez que de moi, et s'il eût après cela résolu d'user de violence, le parti que vous aviez à prendre était de vous retirer de sa cour, attendant ma volenté sur ce qui se serait passé.

8. THE ENTRÉE.—*D'Estrades to Lionne, Aug. 22, 1661.*—Je me préparerai dans la première occasion à porter l'affaire à une si grande hauteur que je suis trompé si les plus sévères trouvent quelque chose à me reprocher.

9. THE ENTRÉE.—*Louis to d'Estrades, Sept. 28, 1661.*—Je désire que, soit que ledit Comte Strozzi [who was expected as Imperial Ambassador to England] vous ait notifié son entrée ou qu'il vous l'ait célée pour complaire à Watteville, vous envoyez vos carrosses au devant de lui, et que vous vous mettiez en état qu'ils conservent la prééminence qui m'est dûe, précédant ceux de tous les autres Ambassadeurs dans la marche. . . . Je ne vous dis rien des mesures que vous aurez dû prendre auparavant pour être bien assuré que vos gens seront en état de se conserver dans la marche le rang qui leur est dû, me promettant que vous n'y omettez rien de possible, et même que la chose vous sera d'autant plus aisée que le Baron de Watteville ne s'y attendra point.

10. THE ENTRÉE.—COMING OF A SWEDISH AMBASSADOR.—*Louis to d'Estrades, Oct. 5, 1661.*—L'avis est que le Général Monk a promis au baron de Watteville de lui donner des soldats de son régiment Ecosais pour, avec quelques Irlandais, appuyer ses gens et son carrosse et que sur cette espérance ledit Watteville s'était résolu d'envoyer à la rencontre de l'Ambassadeur de Suède. Je le sais de science certaine, de la maison de Monk même, par un de ses plus intimes confidants, et que le carrosse partirait pour aller à la place de la Tour de Londres sans que cette escorte parut, mais qu'elle se trouverait ou dans ladite place ou dans d'autres rues par où l'on devra marcher : ce qui me fait juger que quand même votre carrosse aura pris d'abord dans ladite place le rang qui lui est

dû immédiatement après celui de l'Ambassadeur, les gens qui l'appuyèrent ne devront pas l'abandonner qu'on ne soit arrivé au logis dudit Ambassadeur, de crainte qu'au passage de quelque rue qui traverse celle où l'on marchera, les Ecossais ou Irlandais ne viennent le couper avec main forte, pour faire passer celui de Watteville.

11. THE ENTRÉE.—*D'Estrades to Brienne the younger, Oct. 6, 1661.*—Je fais les plus grands préparatifs pour cela [*i.e.*, to maintain his right of precedence], comme l'Ambassadeur d'Espagne fait les siens pour s'y opposer. C'est une affaire remise à Lundi.

12. RIGHT OF ASYLUM.—*D'ESTRADES'S HOUSE BESIEGED.—D'Estrades to Brienne the younger, Oct. 6, 1661.*—Mardi dernier le baron de Cronnenster Suédois, étant poursuivi par des sergents qui avaient ordre de l'arrêter pour quelques intérêts civils se réfugia en mon logis de Chelsea. . . . [The men of the police remove him by force ; but the servants of D'Estrades re-take him ; then a constable comes with about two hundred men :] Cet officier en nombre de plus de deux cents hommes vint pour forcer mon logis et reprendre le prisonnier. Ce qui avait resté de ma maison dans Chelsea et qui ne m'avait pas suivi à la chasse où je fus ce jour là avec le Roi d'Angleterre les repoussa fort vigoureusement. Le prisonnier fut maintenu et l'honneur de l'asile conservé. Il y a eu environ huit de mes gens blessés, beaucoup plus grand nombre de la populace et deux de morts. [Charles thereupon sends a detachment of his own life guards to keep the house of D'Estrades.] . . . Trente soldats y couchèrent la nuit suivante, et depuis même j'ai été obligé d'en retenir une partie pour éviter un nouveau désordre de la part du peuple insolent et séditieux, et qui est accoutumé de se servir de ces prétextes pour piller les maisons des Ambassadeurs, ainsi qu'il est arrivé à plusieurs et nommément à M. le Comte d'Harcourt.

13. THE ENTRÉE.—*Louis to d'Estrades, Oct. 7, 1661.*—Je vous écris hier par l'ordinaire qui part de Paris le mercredi pour vous donner un avis que je souhaite vous être arrivé assez à temps pour vous en prévaloir dans l'occasion de l'entrée de l'Ambassadeur de Suède qui était attendu à Londres. Je vous avoue que j'ai grande impatience de savoir comment cette cérémonie se sera passée, et

d'autant plus que je ne puis presque pas douter que ce n'ait été à votre avantage et à ma satisfaction, après les paroles que le Roi mon frère vous avait données d'appuyer votre dessein et que, sans cela même, vous aurez pu, par le moyen de la garnison de Gravelines et du voisinage de France vous mettre en état par vous même d'ôter aux Espagnols l'envie de vous rien disputer.

14. THE ENTRÉE—THE DEFEAT.—*D'Estrades to Lionne, Oct. 13, 1661.*—Je ne pouvais pas mieux prendre mes postes et mes mesures que j'avais pris pour n'avoir affaire qu'à Watteville ; mais de joindre des soldats déguisés et tout le peuple, quand j'aurais eu mille hommes, j'y aurais succombé. Ma satisfaction est que j'y ai dépensé tout ce que j'ai pu emprunter pour faire subsister les gens que j'avais fait venir, que n'y pouvant être moi-même j'y ai envoyé mon fils et que l'on y a vu que dans le combat, de cinquante hommes qui étaient avec lui, il y en a eu cinq de tués et trente trois de blessés et qu'ils ont soutenu le choc de plus de deux cents hommes, et dans les autres postes où mes gens ont été aussi attaqués, ils ont fait leur devoir de même. . . .

En huit jours j'ai pensé être assassiné deux fois et ai eu mon chapeau percé d'un coup de mousqueton ; des soldats et le peuple me sont venus attaquer jusque dans mon logis.

15. THE ENTRÉE—AFTER THE DISASTER.—*Louis to d'Estrades, Oct. 16, 1661.*—J'ai tant de hâte de faire partir ce gentilhomme . . . que je ne vous dirai pas à beaucoup près tout ce que je voudrais bien vous dire sur les incidents qui vous sont arrivés, vous pouvez croire que je les ai ressentis vivement, comme leur qualité m'y oblige, mon honneur s'y trouvant considérablement intéressé. J'espère avec l'aide de Dieu et par la vigueur des résolutions que j'ai prises et que je pousserai aussi avant qu'on m'en donnera sujet, que ceux qui m'ont causé ce déplaisir seront bientôt plus fâchés et plus en peine que moi.

16. OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.—*Batailler to Lionne, Dec. 1, 1661.*—Le roi d'Angleterre fit hier l'ouverture du Parlement dans la chambre haute, où après avoir pris sa séance paré de son manteau royal et de sa couronne, accompagné de ses grands officiers, tous les Seigneurs gentilshommes et évêques étant assis dans leurs places,

il fit appeler les membres de la chambre basse, qui entrèrent tumultuairement dans la chambre haute, comme la foule du peuple entre dans la chambre de l'audience du Parlement de Paris après que les huissiers ont appelé. Ils demeurèrent au delà d'une barrière qui ferme le parterre où sont assis les Seigneurs, et au milieu se plaça l'orateur debout. En cet état le Roi d'Angleterre commença sa harangue [here follows an analysis of the royal harangue]. Cette harangue à peu près en ce sens dura un quart d'heure, fut fort bien prononcée par le Roi d'Angleterre fort proche duquel je me trouvai et me fut expliquée par 'Milord Belezé.' Ce qui m'en déplut, c'est qu'il la tenait écrite en sa main, jetai très souvent les yeux dessus, et presque comme s'il l'eut lue. L'on m'a dit que c'était la manière d'Angleterre pour éviter de se commettre à la risée du peuple, en cas que par un défaut de mémoire le Roi vint à demeurer court. Les prédicateurs en chaire en usent de même, et, si le chancelier que la goutte empêcha de se trouver à cette action avait fait sa charge, Il aurait été suggéré par derrière.

17. CLEKKS OF THE POST-OFFICE TO BE HANGED.—*D'Estrades to Louis, Chelsea, Jan. 20, 1662.*—[The King of England] me dit comme il avait fait arrêter les deux commis de la poste de Londres, qu'il avait trouvé les enveloppes de ses paquets qui avaient été ouvertes, qu'il avait découvert que Watteville avait donné mille pistoles pour les corrompre, qu'il les allait faire pendre et qu'à l'avenir cela n'arriverait plus.

18. SALE OF DUNKIRK.—*D'Estrades to Lionne, July 17, 1662.*—Je suis bien marri de n'être pas en état d'aller à St. Germain pour parler au Roi d'une affaire qui ne déplaira pas à Sa Majesté et qui lui est très avantageuse. M. le Chancelier d'Angleterre m'a dépêché exprès une personne de confiance et m'a apporté une lettre de créance de sa part. Si vous veniez à Paris, je vous dirais l'affaire qui m'a été proposée pour en rendre compte à Sa Majesté.

19. SALE OF DUNKIRK.—*Batailler to Louis, Dec. 4, 1662.*—L'argent compté à Calais pour le prix de Dunkerque est arrivé ici et a été mis dans la Tour de Londres, où le Roi d'Angleterre l'a voulu voir ce matin en allant se promener à 'Ouleiks.'

20. COMINGES'S JOURNEY.—*Cominges to Louis, Jan. 4, 1663.*—Sire, je ne parlerais pas à Votre Majesté des incommodités que j'ai souffertes dans le voyage, par le débordement des eaux, si je n'y étais nécessité pour excuser le peu de diligence que j'ai faite. Ce n'est pas que je n'aie quasi forcé les éléments à se rendre favorable à Ses desseins, mais tout ce que j'ai pu faire, après avoir évité deux ou trois naufrages sur la terre et souffert la tourmente sur la mer, ç'a été de me rendre ici le 23 Décembre, style d'Angleterre.

21. ENTRÉE OF THE MUSCOVITE ENVOYS.—*Cominges to Lionne, Jan. 8, 1663.*—Vous saurez donc, Monsieur, que l'on lui a fait une entrée tout-à-fait extraordinaire ; tous les marchands ont pris les armes ; les aldermans, qui sont les échevins, ont été le voir et le congratuler de son arrivée ; le Roi de défraye et le loge, et après un mois de séjour il a eu aujourd'hui son audience où quinze ou seize cents hommes de pied se sont mis sous les armes. . . . Son carrosse a entré dans Whitehall contre la coutume. Il est vrai qu'il ne s'est par couvert en parlant au Roi de la Grande Bretagne, mais pour moi, quoi que les Anglais disent, je ne crois pas que ce soit tant par déférence que le Moscovite rend à S. M. B. que par vanité, voulant par ce moyen exclure l'Ambassadeur d'Angleterre de se couvrir parlant à lui. Je crois que ce que nous pouvons raisonnablement prétendre et demander, c'est l'entrée dans Whitehall, parceque pour l'entrée de la ville c'est une chose qui ne regarde que le bien que tirent les marchands de Londres du commerce de la Moscovie, qui, de leur propre mouvement, ont fait toute cette fanfare.

22. SECRET CORRESPONDENCE.—*Cominges to Lionne, Jan. 8, 1663.*—Si vous voulez quelquefois m'écrire sous l'enveloppe d'un marchand, vous pourrez adresser vos lettres, à Monsieur Aymé, chirurgien 'Rue Rose Straet' au Commun Jardin, et moi j'adresserai mes lettres à Mr. Simonnet, banquier à Paris.

23. THE ENTRÉE—THE MUSCOVITE PRECEDENT.—*Louis to Cominges, Jan. 21, 1663.*—Ce que je vous dirai sur cette matière ne seront que des avis sur ce qu'on a pu juger de loin, et non pas des ordres que vous soyez obligé de suivre.

Premièrement, j'estime qu'avant toute chose, vous pourriez vous

enquérir confidemment du chevalier Bennet ou même du Roi quelle est la véritable raison pour laquelle il n'a pas fait couvrir lesdits ambassadeurs. Je vois que vous avez jugé que ce peut être parce que le Czar leur maître ne fait pas couvrir les ambassadeurs des autres Princes, que eux mêmes n'ont pas trop insisté à se couvrir, pour lui conserver cette prérogative. Mais ce qu'a dit ici l'Ambassadeur de Danemark semble détruire l'un et l'autre, car il a dit au Sieur de Lionne . . .

S'ils n'ont que la qualité d'envoyés, quelque train qu'ils aient et quelque honneur extraordinaire qui leur ait été fait, vous ne devriez pas leur donner la main chez vous, d'autant plus qu'ils ne se sont pas couverts devant le Roi, et en ce cas pour éviter cette contestation, si après les avoir fait pressentir, vous trouvez qu'ils prétendent la main sur vous en vous visitant, vous pourriez vous abstenir de leur donner part de votre arrivée.

S'ils ont la qualité d'Ambassadeurs, il y a encore à considérer si, ayant eux mêmes dérogé en ne se couvrant pas, vous devez leur donner la main dans la visite qu'ils vous feraient et qu'ils sont obligés de vous rendre les premiers puisque vous êtes arrivé le dernier ; mais pour ce point je m'en remets à votre prudence de le résoudre après que vous aurez bien examiné la chose et su quel est leur pouvoir et leur caractère et pour quelle raison on ne les a pas fait couvrir.

En cas que vous jugiez à propos de leur accorder la main chez vous, il reste encore à savoir si vous la devez accorder à tous trois. Sur quoi je vous dirai que, pourvu qu'ils ne soient pas entre eux d'une qualité fort inégale et qu'ils aient tous le même caractère et le même pouvoir, vous n'en devez faire aucune difficulté. . . .

Pour ce qui regarde maintenant le Roi d'Angleterre et l'avantage que vous pouvez tirer du traitement extraordinaire qui a été fait à ces Moscovites, je crois que, sans prétendre tout ce que le peuple principalement et les marchands qui font leur trafic en Moscovie ont fait dans ce rencontre pour les obliger, vous pouvez vous restreindre à l'entrée de votre carrosse dans 'Wital' et que le régiment des gardes soit en haie et tambour battant lorsque vous passerez. . . .

Pour ce qui est d'éviter, comme vous proposez une entrée publique dans Londres, je ne le puis approuver par diverses raisons, dont je ne vous marquerai que la principale, qui est que, si vous évitez

cette cérémonie, comme l'a déjà fait Watteville, cet exemple s'introduirait bientôt et bien facilement pour tous les autres ambassadeurs, et quand il y aurait à l'avenir un ambassadeur d'Espagne à Londres et que l'occasion de pareilles fonctions n'arriverait plus, je n'aurais plus de moyens de faire voir au public qu'il cède la rang au mien sans le contester et ne concourt plus avec lui, en exécution de l'accommodement qui a été fait entre moi et le Roi mon beau père sur l'insulte de Watteville. Quant à l'inconvénient que vous alléguiez que votre entrée ne se pourra faire si honorablement que celle des Moscovites, je le tiens de nulle considération, eu égard à l'autre plus grand qui en arriverait, de ne pouvoir plus trouver d'occasion de faire abstenir des fonctions publiques les ambassadeurs d'Espagne.

24. THE ACT OF UNIFORMITY.—THE DECLARATION OF 1663.—*Cominges to the King, Jan. 22, 1663.*—La déclaration du Roi de la Grande Bretagne, publiée ces jours passés dans la ville de Londres me donne suffisamment de la matière d'écrire à V. M. pour lui faire savoir les différents mouvements qu'elle a produits dans l'esprit de ces peuples, selon qu'ils sont poussés de haine contre le personne de leur roi, d'amour pour la république et de mépris pour le ministère.

L'acte d'uniformité . . . a eu de si funestes succès que l'on a découvert plusieurs conspirations contre S. M. dont s'est ensuivi des exemples de mort, de bannissement . . . qui, bien loin d'apaiser et de faire craindre ces fanatiques, leur inspire à toute heure des attentats contre toute la famille royale, avec un tel mépris de leur vie qu'ils semblent courir à la mort comme à un remède à tous leurs maux.

25. CHARLES'S CHARACTER.—*Cominges to Louis, Jan. 25, 1663.*—Toutes les vertus des particuliers ne sont pas royales et peut être celle de la bonté a trop d'empire sur l'esprit du Roi de la Grande Bretagne qui, par excès, s'engage souvent plus avant qu'il ne voudrait ou du moins qu'il ne serait convenable.

26. ARRIVAL OF GRAMONT.—*Cominges to Louis, Jan. 25, 1663.*—Le chevalier de Gramont arriva hier fort content de son voyage. Il a été reçu le plus agréablement du monde. Il est de toutes

les parties du Roi et commande chez Madame de Castlemaine qui fit hier un assez bon tour. Madame Jaret avec laquelle elle a ici un grand démêlé devait donner à souper à Leurs Majestés. Toutes choses préparées et la compagnie assemblée, le Roi en sortit et s'en alla chez Madame de Castlemaine où il passa l'après-souper. Cela a fait un grand bruit ; les cabales se remuent ; chacun songe à la vengeance ; les unes sont pleines de jalousie, les autres de dépit et toutes en général d'étonnement. Le ballet est rompu manque de moyens. . . .

27. COURT FESTIVITIES.—*Cominges to Louis, Jan. 25, 1663.*—Il y a bal de deux jours l'un et comédie aussi ; les autres jours se passent au jeu, les uns chez la Reine, les autres chez Madame de Castlemaine où la compagnie ne manque pas d'un bon souper. Voilà, Sire, à quoi l'on passe ici le temps. L'approche du terme du Parlement donnera bientôt d'autres pensées. Les plus habiles ont déjà commencé à faire leurs cabales, et les autres attendent l'occasion pour faire valoir leurs talents dans une si célèbre assemblée.

28. DIPLOMATIC STYLE.—*Cominges to Louis, Jan. 25, 1663.*—[Cominges will begin at the beginning] pour donner quelque forme à cette dépêche et ne la pas présenter à V. M. comme un monstre sans pieds et sans tête.

29. RUMOURS CONCERNING THE SIEGE OF GENEVA.—*Lionne to Cominges, Jan. 28, 1663.*—Détruisez nous, je vous en prie, ou par moquerie ou par bonnes raisons cette imposture qui prend cours touchant Genève. Elle n'est pas même dans le bon sens ; nous sommes aux épées et couteaux tirés avec la Cour de Rome, à notre grand regret, et on veut que tout l'orage qui se prépare contre le Vatican n'aille fondre que sur ses mortels ennemis qui ne nous font point de mal et qui n'auraient eu garde d'assassiner nos Ambassadeurs.

30. THE REPORTED SIEGE OF GENEVA.—*Louis to Cominges, Jan. 28, 1663.*—N'omettez rien de ce qui sera en votre pouvoir pour détruire cette fable du siège de Genève que mes envieux répandent à dessein de me faire perdre l'affection de tous les Protestants, dont cet Etat [*i.e.*, France] a eu quelquefois bien besoin, et tâchent de la

gagner eux-mêmes. Jamais cette pensée ne m'est tombée dans l'esprit, comme la suite le fera voir. J'ai la passion que je dois pour le véritable culte de Dieu, mais je ne crois pas que ce soit sa volonté qu'il soit établi par les armes ou par l'invasion des états d'autrui.

31 D'ESTRADES REGRETTED BY CLARENDON.—*Clarendon to Lionne, Jan. 29, 1663.*—Je plains tous les jours le départ de Monsieur d'Estrades d'ici et, aussi souvent que j'ai occasion de parler sur les affaires de France, souhaite que ce pourrait être avec lui.

32. TEMPER OF THE ENGLISH NATION.—*Cominges to Louis, Feb. 12, 1663.*—[Louis must succour the Portuguese] sans se rebuter de la conduite de ces gens ici qui ne se connaissent pas encore, qui n'ont quasi pas de forme de gouvernement, et dont les maux passés sont encore si présents qu'ils ne songent à autre chose que de s'empêcher d'y retomber. . . . Ils sont lents, froids et stégmatiques . . . immobiles, transis et insensibles à tout ce qui devrait les émouvoir.

33. FETE AT THE FRENCH EMBASSY.—*Cominges to Lionne, Feb. 15, 1663.*—Ma maison sera ouverte demain, avec trente personnes vêtues de deuil, quatre carrosses et huit ou dix gentilshommes. Le Roi et M. le Duc d'York me feront l'honneur d'y dîner. Ce n'est pas que j'aie prié S. M.; mais Il a voulu être de la partie de tous les illustres débauchés de son royaume. Je voudrais bien que vous en fussiez, seulement pour deux heures, pour me donner ensuite vos bons avis et une embrassade qui me serait chère a proportion de l'estime et de l'amitié que j'ai pour vous.

34. DINNERS TO M.P.s.—*Cominges to Louis, Feb. 19, 1663.*—L'on attend le Parlement, les seigneurs s'assemblent et commencent à venir des provinces. . . . J'espère que durant le terme du Parlement j'en attirerai quelqu'un chez moi par ma civilité et je profiterai de leur connaissance particulière pour acquérir la générale de leur pays, de leurs mœurs et de leurs lois.

35. VARIETY OF SUBJECTS TO BE TREATED BY AMBASSADORS.—*Louis to Cominges, Feb. 22, 1663.*—Vous ne devez point appré-

hender en semblables rencontres de vous écarter trop de votre sujet en me disant toujours vos sentiments sur quelque affaire que ce soit, car, outre que j'en ferai beaucoup de cas, rien de ce qui se passe dans le monde n'est hors de la portée et de la politique d'un bon Ambassadeur.

36. ST. EVREMONT AND GRAMONT.—*Cominges to the King, Feb. 22, 1663.*—Le bruit ayant couru dans Londres des raisons qui retardaient mon entrée, le chevalier de Gramont, and le Sr. de St. Evremont me sont venus trouver comme bons Français et zélés pour la gloire et l'autorité de V. M. Je me servirai de l'un et de l'autre selon que je jugerai à propos, et s'ils font leur devoir comme je suis persuadé qu'ils feront, j'espère que V. M. aura la bonté de les ouïr nommer et permettra qu'ils méritent par leur service qu'Elle leur pardonne après une pénitence conforme à leur faute.

37. THE SON OF LIONNE.—*Lionne to Cominges, Feb. 25, 1663.*—Je ne sais, Monsieur, quelles grâces vous rendre de l'offre obligeante qu'il vous a plu me faire touchant mon fils. Il a déjà tant couru le monde que je n'ai aucune pensée de l'envoyer encore promener, mais seulement qu'il répare dans ses études l'interruption que ses voyages y ont causée. Cependant je vous fais mille remerciements très humbles de la grâce que vous lui vouliez faire.

38. INSTRUCTIONS TO COMINGES ON HIS ENTRÉE.—*Louis to Cominges, Feb. 25, 1663.*—J'ai reçu votre ample dépêche du 19^e, sur l'incident qui vous arrive de la difficulté que fait aujourd'hui le Roi d'Angleterre de révoquer le décret par lequel il ordonna que les ministres publics n'enverraient plus à l'avenir leurs carrosses aux entrées des autres qui surviendraient : en quoi, le décret subsistant, vous ne recevriez point seulement le préjudice que votre entrée ne pourrait être honorée de l'accompagnement du carrosse de l'Ambassadeur de Portugal et de ceux des autres ministres des Princes, mais vous vous trouveriez même hors d'état de reprendre jamais la possession de préséance qui est due à mes Ambassadeurs du propre aveu et déférence des Espagnols, s'il arrivait que le Roi mon beau-père envoyât un nouvel Ambassadeur à Londres.

J'ai vu avec quel zèle et quelle fermeté vous avez soutenu une prétention où vous croyiez ma gloire intéressée, lorsque vous avez

agité la matière avec le Maître des cérémonies et, depuis, avec le chancelier et le Chevalier Bennet. Je n'aurais pas attendu moins de votre affection et vous en sais beaucoup de gré. Mais comme en des matières si graves, je ne veux rien faire avec précipitation, j'ai estimé à propos d'attendre l'arrivée de la personne que vous mandez que le Roi d'Angleterre me doit envoyer, et écouter ce qu'il aura à me dire avant que prendre ma dernière résolution. Je vous donnerai seulement avis par avance que la conduite que vous devrez tenir de delà pendant ce petit intervalle de temps, doit être d'adoucir autant que vous pourrez ce que, par le transport de votre zèle pour ma gloire vous pourrez avoir un peu trop aigri, et éviter surtout d'en venir à aucuns reproches qui ne font rien au fait et ne laissent pas d'échauffer les esprits, qu'il est plus mal aisé après de faire revenir dans l'assiette qui nous convient à tous. S'il y a quelque mauvaise réponse à donner, il vaut mieux que je m'en charge, et même qu'il paraisse toujours de delà que vous avez fait tous vos efforts auprès de moi, pour les obliger, afin que votre personne et votre ministère leur soient toujours agréables, et si la réponse est bonne, par la même raison, je la ferai passer par votre canal.

39. EXPECTED REPORT ON PARLIAMENTARY INSTITUTIONS.—*Lionne to Cominges, Feb. 28, 1663.*—Le Roi verra avec grand plaisir les relations exactes que vous vous proposiez de lui envoyer de tout ce qui se passera dans le Parlement, et, en mon particulier, je ne saurais vous exprimer combien je me suis réjoui de cette espérance que vous nous donnez.

40. COURT NEWS.—*Cominges' Sheet of Court News, Feb., 1663.*—[King Charles II. complains of unpleasant rumours concerning himself, which he attributes] à cette braque de Jaret, encore dit-on que le mot anglais dont il s'est servi veut dire quelque chose d'avantage. . . .

Le chevalier de Gramont continue sa vie ordinaire. Il voit les dames aux heures permises, et un peu aux défendues. . . . Le Roi le fait souvent appeler dans ses divertissements. Il fait sa cour à Madame de Castlemaine et a, par conséquent, peu de commerce avec Madame Jaret.

41. NEGOTIATION IN WRITING CONCERNING THE ETIQUETTE OF THE ENTRÉES. *Louis to Cominges, March 14, 1663.*—Comme nous sommes tous mortels, et que peut être, de soixante ans, le cas n'arrivera, je serais bien aise de laisser au Dauphin cette marque qu'il pût faire voir de la justice et de la bonne volonté du Roi de la Grande Bretagne, afin que, quand le temps et les personnes auront changé, il ne se puisse alors rencontrer de difficulté en une chose si claire que les parties intéressées y ont elles mêmes donné les mains.

42. A FRAY AT COMINGES'S DOOR.—*Cominges to Louis, March 15, 1663.*—Le jour du mardi gras qui semble autoriser les débauches qui produisent ordinairement les désordres, il pensa en arriver un grand dans ma maison. Un valet de celui qui me la loue donna un coup d'épée sur la tête à un garçon de boutique, et, étant poussé par le peuple, se jeta dans ma cour dont la porte était ouverte. Quelques uns de mes gens s'opposèrent à force de bras seulement et de remontrances à l'effort que l'on voulait faire pour y entrer, cependant que les autres mettaient ledit valet en sureté. Sitôt qu'il y fut, l'on laissa l'entrée libre ; on demanda seulement le criminel. . . . mais apprenant qu'il était évadé les plus insolents jetèrent des pierres contre les vitres. Le bruit parvint jusques à moi qui avais déjà demandé mon carrosse pour sortir. Je me présentai à tout ce peuple qui se retira, et, de mon côté, je fis rentrer tous mes domestiques et fermer ma porte, et avec un seul gentilhomme et un page, je continuai mon voyage à la ville comme j'avais résolu. Ainsi tout se sépara ; l'asile ne fut point violé [et] ma personne [fut] respectée.

43. THE ENGLISH PARLIAMENT.—*Cominges to Louis, March 15, 1663.*—J'apprends du plus grand politique qu'ait eu l'Angleterre, qui est le chancelier Bacon, que la plus assurée et la plus proche marque de sédition est la disposition des sujets à interpréter les volontés du Souverain. Si cet axiome est véritable pour le régime d'Angleterre, il n'est que trop apparent que ce Parlement ne se passera pas sans quelque trouble. Mais, comme ce royaume n'est pas absolument monarchique et qu'il se conduit par des lois auxquelles le Roi donne l'âme par sa ratification, mais nullement valables que par le mutuel consentement des deux chambres, l'on peut inférer

qu'étant conduit avec discrétion et sans emportement, l'on en tirera du fruit pour le repos de l'Etat et pour l'affermissement de l'autorité royale dans les bornes prescrites par la loi.

J'espère dans peu de jours envoyer à V. M. un petit traité auquel je travaille, touchant l'institution, l'autorité et la manière de procéder au Parlement. Il m'a fallu beaucoup lire pour en tirer quelques lumières particulières, car il est dangereux de s'informer beaucoup, ce peuple étant soupçonneux et méfiant au dernier point. . . . Si je vois que V. M. soit satisfaite de mon dessein, je continuerai sur les matières les plus importantes de ce royaume et ainsi, avec le temps, je défricherai les choses les plus épineuses et les plus cachées dans leur gouvernement.

44. D'ESTRADES'S ENGLISH.—*Cominges to Louis, March 19, 1663.*—[Cominges explique] que si le Chancelier ne trouvait pas dans mon esprit tant de docilité que dans celui de M. D'Estrades, le défaut venait de ce que je n'entendais pas sa langue, qui ne produisait pas si bien son effet par le secours d'un interprète que si elle fût sortie toute pure de sa bouche.

45. LOUIS'S CURIOSITY ABOUT FOREIGN MEN OF LETTERS AND SCIENCE.—*Louis to Cominges, March 25, 1663.*—Je finis ma dépêche par un ordre à l'exécution duquel vous me ferez plaisir d'apporter grande application. Prenez soin de vous enquérir, sans qu'il paraisse que je vous en aie écrit, mais comme pour votre simple curiosité, quelles sont, dans l'étendue des [trois royaumes qui composent celui de la Grande Bretagne] les personnes les plus insignes et qui excellent notablement par dessus les autres en tous genres de profession et de science et de m'envoyer une liste bien exacte, contenant les circonstances de leur naissance, de leur richesse ou pauvreté, du travail auquel elles s'appliquent et de leurs qualités. L'objet que je me propose en cela est d'être informé de ce qu'il y a de plus excellent et de plus exquis dans chaque pays, en quelque profession que ce soit, pour en user après ainsi que je l'estimerai à propos pour ma gloire ou pour mon service. Mais cette perquisition doit être faite avec grande circonspection et exactitude, sans que ces personnes là même ni aucune autre s'aperçoivent de mon dessein ni de votre recherche.

46. THE FRAY AT COMINGES'S DOOR.—*Louis to Cominges, March 25, 1663.*—Je suis bien aise que vous soyez sorti heureusement, sans plus grand engagement et autant à votre honneur que vous avez fait, de cette émeute de peuple, que l'imprudence d'un valet de votre hôte avait suscitée contre votre palais, et qui pouvait devenir une grande et facheuse affaire, si votre prudence et votre intrépidité n'en eût d'abord arrêté les suites. Ce sont de ces sortes d'incidents que toute la sagesse humaine ne saurait prévoir. Sur-tout j'ai fort estimé les deux circonstances de vous être présenté à tout le peuple, ce qui apaisa le désordre, et d'être sorti au même instant, comme vous l'aviez auparavant résolu, accompagné seulement d'un gentilhomme et d'un page.

47. CONVERSATION BY INTERPRETER WITH CLARENDON.—*Cominges to Louis, March 26, 1663.*—Il vint me recevoir à la porte de sa salle et me donna audience dans son cabinet où le Sr. Bennet assista pour nous servir d'interprète, et, afin que nous nous puissions mieux entendre, je divisai mon discours en huit ou dix points auxquels M. le Chancelier répondait, et puis, par l'organe du Sr. Bennet, je recevais la réponse.

48. COMINGES'S PREPARATIONS BEFORE A ROYAL AUDIENCE.—*Cominges to Louis, March 26, 1663.*—Cette diligence à prévenir le temps que j'avais prescrit m'eût surpris si, de bonne fortune, je n'eusse employé toute la nuit à préparer ce que j'avais à dire, et lui donner une forme qui, dans la dignité de la matière, ne manquât pas d'insinuations agréables, pour la faire écouter plus attentivement.

49. ENGLISH NOTE CONCERNING THE ENTRÉE.—*Trevor to Louis, March 29, 1663.*—Le Roi mon maître m'a encore chargé de donner sa parole à Votre Majesté qu'en quelque temps qu'il arrive un ambassadeur d'Espagne en sa cour, si les mêmes raisons de la paix et du repos de la ville de Londres subsistaient encore alors, et que cette considération l'empêchât, comme elle fait aujourd'hui, de changer et révoquer la résolution faite en l'année 1661, en ce cas là, le Roi mon maître, en toutes les autres occasions où le concours du peuple ne sera pas à appréhender, comme à des bals, festins,

mariages, et autres cérémonies qui se feront à Whitehall et dans les maisons royales ou en la présence du Roi mon maître, Sa Majesté fera sincèrement et de bonne foi jouir pleinement, en ce qui dépendra de Lui, l'Ambassadeur de Votre Majesté de la préséance que l'Espagne lui a cédée.

50. INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING THE ENTRÉE.—*Louis to Cominges, April 1, 1663.*—Vous pouvez donc maintenant faire votre entrée sans l'accompagnement d'aucun carrosse des autres ministres étrangers, conformément au décret du Roi de la Grande Bretagne de l'année 1661, que vous remarquerez dans l'écrit que je n'ai laissé nommer que résolution, attendu que l'autre terme est odieux à l'égard des Ambassadeurs, sur la conduite desquels il ne semble pas que personne puisse rien décréter que leurs propres souverains.

51. COMINGES'S REPORT ON PARLIAMENT.—*April 2, 1663.*—[From the MS. 526, fol. 269, *et seq.* of the Toulouse Library, containing copies of the correspondence of d'Estrades]—Discours sur le Parlement, fait et qui m'a été envoyé en Hollande par M. de Cominges. . . . La matière sur laquelle j'ai résolu d'entretenir V. M. est si délicate, si ample et si pleine de difficultés que les plus habiles écrivains qui s'en sont mêlés jusqu'à ce temps ne sont pas d'accord entre eux de beaucoup de points essentiels, dont l'éclaircissement dépend de la recherche des archives qui sont souvent défectueuses et des circonstances de l'histoire qui difficilement et presque jamais ne se rencontrent sans partialité, si bien que, pour en traiter à fond il faudrait être fort versé dans les lois d'Angleterre et jouir de cet heureux loisir qui m'a toujours été dénié par les traverses de ma mauvaise fortune. Ainsi, Sire, V. M. aura la bonté d'excuser mes fautes et de se contenter de ce que j'ai pu apprendre dans la conversation des honnêtes gens et puiser dans le texte des meilleurs écrivains.

[He will do his best to describe] ce grand corps que l'on peut appeler auguste en cet Etat, puisque quelques uns n'ont pas douté d'y placer le souverain pouvoir. . . .

Quant au terme de Parlement que le latin de la loi Anglaise nomme *Parliamentum* il est étranger et vint apparemment avec le langage normand qui fournit encore aujourd'hui le texte de toutes les vieilles lois d'Angleterre. . . . Il y a quelques légistes anglais

qui, voulant tirer une allusion du jargon ou vieil normand de leurs lois, veulent que Parlement soit dit "*Parler de la ment*"; *loqui ex mente*, parce que c'est un lieu privilégié pour les membres de l'une et de l'autre chambre, qui peuvent impunément déclarer leurs sentiments, même contre le Roi, sans pouvoir être censurés ni molestés pour ce regard, ce pendant qu'ils parlent entre les parois de leurs chambres respectives.

52. ENGLISH MEN OF LETTERS.—*Cominges to Louis, April 2, 1663.*—L'ordre que je reçois de V. M. [de m'informer avec soin et circonspection des hommes les plus illustres des trois royaumes qui composent celui de la Grande Bretagne, tant aux arts qu'aux sciences]—the passage between parentheses was ciphered in the original—est une marque de la grandeur et de l'élévation de Son âme ; rien ne me paraît de plus glorieux, et V. M. me permettra s'il lui plait, de la féliciter d'avoir eu une pensée si digne d'un grand monarque et qui ne le rendra pas moins illustre dans les siècles à venir que la conquête d'une place et le gain d'une bataille. Mu de curiosité, et l'esprit toujours tendu au service et à la gloire de V. M. . . . j'avais déjà jeté quelque plan pour m'éclaircir, mais je n'avais pas encore été fort satisfait. Il semble que les arts et les sciences abandonnent quelquefois un pays pour en aller honorer un autre à son tour. Présentement elles ont passé en France, et, s'il en reste ici quelques vestiges, ce n'est que dans la mémoire de Bacon, de Morus, de Buchanan et, dans les derniers siècles, d'un nommé Miltonius qui s'est rendu plus infâme par ses dangereux écrits que les bourreaux et les assassins de leur roi. Je ne manquerai pourtant pas de m'informer fort soigneusement et avec d'autant plus de joie que rien au monde ne me semble plus digne de V. M.

53. THANKS TO COMINGES FOR HIS REPORT ON PARLIAMENT.—*Louis to Cominges, April 8, 1663.*—J'ai reçu votre dépêche du 2 Avril et votre discours sur l'institution, les fonctions et l'autorité des Parlements d'Angleterre, que je me propose de lire avec grand plaisir et d'en tirer une idée qui me demeurera dans l'esprit pour ma pleine instruction sur une matière si importante et que l'on a tous les jours occasion de traiter. C'est pourquoi, par avance, vous ne devez pas douter que je ne vous sache gré de l'application

que vous avez voulu donner à cette curieuse recherche et à ce travail.

54. LIONNE'S THANKS FOR THE SAME.—*Lionne to Cominges, April 8, 1663.*—Depuis que le Roi a signé la lettre qu'il vous écrit, S. M. a eu le temps d'écouter avec grande attention, d'un bout à l'autre, la lecture du bel écrit que vous lui avez adressé touchant le Parlement d'Angleterre. Je vous avais toujours bien cru, Monsieur, un cavalier fort éclairé et très habile, mais je vous demande aujourd'hui pardon du tort que je vous ait fait longtemps de ne vous avoir pas cru de cette force. Jamais je n'ai rien vu de mieux couché par écrit, de plus judicieux et plus curieusement recherché.

55. A PAPAL PLENIPOTENTIARY—THE CRÉQUI AFFAIR.—*Lionne to Cominges, April 8, 1663.*—Le Plénipotentiaire du Pape n'était pas encore parti de Rome, le 24^{me} du passé pour venir à Lyon. Il se sera sans doute mis en chemin aussitôt après les fêtes, et, comme il est gros et gras et qu'il vient en carrosse et en litière, je ne juge pas qu'il puisse se rendre au lieu de l'abouchement que vers le vingtième du courant.

56. POSTAL DELAYS.—*Cominges to Lionne, April 9, 1663.*—Une de vos lettres . . . s'est trouvée dans la poche d'un courrier qui s'est noyé vers Boulogne. Elle est en si mauvais état que je ne m'en saurais quasi servir, si bien que je crois que ce serait à propos de m'en envoyer une autre de pareille substance.

57. POLITICAL ADVANTAGES OF THE CATHOLIC CREED.—*Cominges to Lionne, April 13, 1663.*—Le Roi de la Grande Bretagne ne fera rien contre notre religion que contraint et forcé par les chambres, parce que je le trouve persuadé que aucune autre n'est si propre pour l'autorité absolue.

58. THE INTENDED TREATY OF UNION WITH ENGLAND.—*Louis to d'Estrades (at the Hague), April 13, 1663.*—J'ai eu la réponse que le chancelier d'Angleterre vous a faite, qui m'a plus confirmé dans tous les soupçons que j'avais du changement de volonté du Roi son maître sur notre union, que toutes les autres considérations qui me l'avaient jusque là fait soupçonner. Il y avait de bien meilleures

raisons à dire pour un habile homme qui veut excuser les longueurs : sa goutte, les affaires du nouveau parlement, l'inapplication de quelque ministre subalterne—tout cela valait encore mieux que de se plaindre que le sieur de Cominges n'a pas encore pris la qualité d'ambassadeur. Il est absurde de dire qu'elle est nécessaire pour faire un traité ; il suffit d'en avoir le pouvoir. Le sieur de Lionne a traité la paix même, à Madrid, caché dans un trou du Buen Retiro. . . . Le chancelier . . . voit peut être que son maître médite de s'unir plutôt avec les Espagnols qu'avec moi. Cominges aura maintenant fait son entrée et on verra qu'ils ne s'en hâteront pas davantage de traiter avec lui ; tous ces énigmes seront bientôt développés et je saurai à quoi m'en tenir.

59. TUNISIAN CORSAIRS.—*Louis to Cominges, April 18, 1663.*—J'ai reçu il y a deux jours une nouvelle qui m'a fort réjoui par les conséquences que j'en tire plus que pour la chose en soi. J'ai eu avis que quelques vaisseaux de mon escadre que commande le Chevalier Paul ont donné chasse à deux corsaires de Barbarie, et, les ayant fait échouer à la côte sous La Goulette, les ont brûlés tous deux, bien qu'ils fussent sous le canon de la forteresse. Les Turcs qui les montaient au nombre de six cents se sont tous jetés à la mer, mais, outre le dommage que ces pirates ont reçu, j'en tire la conséquence que, contre la croyance qu'on avait eue jusqu'ici, la légèreté des navires de ces corsaires n'est pas telle que nos vaisseaux ne les puissent joindre. On a fait aussi une autre petite prise de vingt-six Turcs qui ont été amenés à Toulon dans mes galères.

60. COMINGES'S ENTRÉE—THE EVENT.—*Cominges to Lionne, April 19, 1663.*—Vous saurez donc, Monsieur, que toutes choses étant préparées et arrêtées de part et d'autre, le 14^{me} du mois, l'Aide des Cérémonies me vint prendre dans ma maison avec trois barges du Roi pour me conduire à 'Grennitche' qui est le lieu où l'on va recevoir les Ambassadeurs pour les conduire à Londres. Je n'y fus pas sitôt arrivé que le Maître des Cérémonies y arriva accompagné de cinq ou six officiers du Roi, qui, m'ayant complimenté sur mon arrivée, me dit que 'M. le Comte d'Evinchères' arriverait bientôt de la part de son maître pour me conduire. Il arriva une heure après avec une grande escorte, et six gentilshommes de

la chambre et quatre barges du Roi, et une superbement ornée, dans laquelle il me fit entrer après avoir dit l'ordre qu'il avait de me venir recevoir.

Sitôt que nous fumes embarqués, les vaisseaux qui étaient dans le port firent une décharge de leur artillerie. Durant le trajet la conversation ne fut que sur la grandeur du Roi et sur les belles qualités de sa personne. De ma part, je ne fus pas muet sur celles du Roi d'Angleterre. Nous arrivâmes à la Tour qui avait arboré le pavillon royal, qui est une des marques les plus honorables que l'on puisse rendre à un Ambassadeur. Quelques gardes du Roi étaient en haie sur le bord de l'eau pour faciliter ma descente et écarter le peuple qui y était en quantité prodigieuse.

L'on me fit monter dans le carrosse du Roi qui est magnifique. J'y entrai avec le comte 'd'Evinchères,' mon fils et le Maître des Cérémonies. Nous fumes arrêtés quelque temps pour donner loisir à l'Aide des Cérémonies de mettre en marche plus de cinquante carrosses à six chevaux et plusieurs autres ; et sitôt que l'on commença à marcher l'on tira de la Tour cent quatre coups de canon, savoir soixante et dix pour l'ambassadeur, vingt pour le Roi et le reste pour le Gouverneur. J'en vis l'ordre et la distribution signés du Secrétaire d'Etat. Nous marchâmes près d'une lieue au travers d'une si grande foule de peuple et de carrosses qui étaient au coin des rues, que nous fumes plus de trois heures à faire le chemin.

Enfin j'arrivai à travers cette foule à mon logis où, après avoir remercié mon conducteur et l'avoir reconduit jusques à son carrosse, et fait compliment à tous ceux qui l'avaient accompagné de la part du Roi, je fus visité de sa part par le fils du grand Chamberlain, le lendemain de la part des Reines, du duc d'York et de la Duchesse ; le lendemain qui fut le dimanche, je fus visité de plusieurs personnes de qualité ; M. le duc de 'Buquinhams' commença le premier. Mon audience fut résolue au Mardi à trois heures.

M. le comte de 'Belhfort' me vint prendre de la part du Roi avec autant de carrosses que le jour de mon entrée. Je fus conduit à Whitehall au milieu des gardes qui étaient en haie, tambour battant et la cavalerie trompette sonnante. J'entrai dans le carrosse du Roi, qui est la même chose que l'on fit aux Moscovites, les miens ayant demeuré à la porte. Je ne voulus pas demander

davantage, outre que ce n'est pas la coutume et que cela ne fait en cette cour aucune conséquence. . . . [He sees then the King, Queen, &c.]

Le lendemain j'eus audience de la Reine-mère qui, pour obliger le Roi, voulut que mes carrosses entrassent chez elle. Je la trouvai accompagnée d'une grande quantité de dames et je vous avoue que je fus reçu par tous les officiers avec tant d'honneurs que l'on ne saurait rien y ajouter. . . . J'espère que demain je verrai le chancelier et puis je donnerai deux ou trois jours à recevoir les visites des ministres étrangers qui sont ici, et puis je leur rendrai, afin de faire toutes choses selon l'ordre.

61. COMINGES'S EXPENSES FOR HIS CHAPEL.—*To Lionne, April 19, 1663.*—Sans contredit voici bien le lieu du monde où il se fait le plus de dépense et où l'on fait le plus de litière d'argent. Je trouve que nous sommes bien heureux qu'il n'y ait point ici d'ambassadeur d'Espagne. Il faudrait bien que notre Maître ouvrit sa bourse. Il n'est pas possible de vivre ici pour deux milles écus par mois. Sans parler des choses extraordinaires, le louage des maisons, le change de l'argent et le port des lettres consomment un tiers de ce que me donne S. M. Je ne me plaindrais pas si j'avais de quoi soutenir cette dépense, mais la honte de succomber serait pour moi le dernier des supplices. . . . Je ne vous ai pas seulement parlé de la dépense de ma chapelle, sur laquelle je n'avais jamais fait d'état, et si il est vrai qu'elle est forte et si nécessaire qu'il vaudrait mieux retrancher toutes choses que de ne pas faire cette dépense avec magnificence. J'ai tous les jours six messes qui ne suffisent pas à la foule qui se trouve pour les ouïr. Il y a jusqu'à soixante et quatre-vingts communions tous les dimanches et le nombre va bien augmenter sitôt que l'on donnera la chasse aux prêtres.

62. THE ENTRÉE.—ST. EVREMONT AND GRAMONT.—*Cominges to Louis, April 19, 1663.*—Les Français qui se sont trouvés en cette Cour ont fait leur devoir, et le Chevalier de Gramont y a paru avec la même magnificence qu'il a accoutumé de faire en semblables actions ; le pauvre St. Evremont, moins brave, mais plus affligé et inconsolable, s'il n'avait quelque espérance qu'enfin V. M. lui pardonnera une faute où son esprit a plus de part que son cœur.

63. THE ENTRÉE.—APPROVAL OF LOUIS.—*Louis to Cominges, April 29, 1663.*—J'ai appris avec beaucoup de satisfaction par vos dépêches du 19 du courant que toutes choses se soient si bien passées et avec tant d'avantage pour ma dignité et tant de lustre pour votre Ambassade dans les cérémonies de votre entrée et de vos audiences publiques. Je voudrais seulement que le peuple qui y a concouru avec tant d'affluence eût eu plutôt en cela un motif d'affection que de curiosité.

64. CHARLES'S OPINION ON COMINGES.—*Bellings to d'Estrades, May 22, 1663.*—[Le Roi] s'est souvent plaint à moi de la conduite de M. de Cominges qui lui paraît extraordinaire ou, pour me servir de ses paroles, qui lui fait perdre la tramontane et le réduit à ne savoir plus où il en est. . . . Dans tous ses discours il témoigne vour regretter fort et souhaiter votre retour en ce pays ; il me dit encore hier que s'il avait la satisfaction de vous voir ici qu'il assurerait que les affaires prendraient bientôt un autre pli et seraient bientôt terminées. Je le souhaite de tout mon cœur.

65. A DRINKING BOUT.—*Cominges to Louis, May 28, 1663.*—Il est arrivé depuis huit jours une affaire assez plaisante en cette cour. M. le Comte d'Oxford, un des plus qualifiés seigneurs d'Angleterre, chevalier de la Jarretière et maître de Camp du Régiment de cavalerie du Roi pria à dîner le Général Monk, le Grand Chancelier du Royaume, et quelques autres conseillers d'Etat. A ce nombre se joignirent tous les jeunes gens de qualité. La débauche s'échauffa à tel point que chacun y fut offenseur et offensé ; l'on se gourma, l'on s'arracha les cheveux ; enfin deux de la troupe se battirent à coups d'épée, mais, assez heureusement, cette escarmouche sépara la compagnie. Chacun prit son parti selon son inclination ; ceux qui s'en allèrent avec le Général demandèrent à boire : on leur en donna. Ils poussèrent l'affaire jusques au soir, ce qui les obligea de demander à manger. Etant échauffés du matin et de l'après dîner, chacun résolut de porter son compagnon par terre. Le Général qui a sans doute la tête plus forte fit un coup de maître en leur présentant à chacun un hanap qui tenait beaucoup ; les uns l'avalèrent, les autres ne purent, mais généralement tous demeurèrent jusques au lendemain sans avoir conversation quoique en même cnombre. Le seul Général alla au Parle-

ment comme à son ordinaire et n'en perdit ni le jugement ni l'esprit. Cela a fait rire la compagnie.

66. LOUIS AT WORK.—THE MEASLES.—*Lionne to Cominges, June 3, 1663.*—Votre éloignement vous aura servi de vous exempter des transes terribles où nous avons été pendant deux jours de la semaine passée, puisque vous apprendrez plutôt l'entière guérison du Roi que vous n'aurez su sa maladie. Lorsque le dernier ordinaire d'Angleterre partit, Sa Majesté qui était, le jour auparavant, à Versailles n'avait eu encore qu'une légère émotion, mais le mal se déclara bientôt et l'on reconnut avec la douleur que vous pouvez imaginer que c'était la rougeole, contractée par son inséparabilité avec la Reine lorsqu'elle en avait été atteinte. Vous savez peut-être que ce mal n'est jamais sans danger aux personnes qui ont passé vingt ans ; et, en effet, on ne peut pas être plus malade que le Roi ne fut tout le jour et la nuit du jeudi et toute la matinée du vendredi jusqu'au midi. Je frémis encore d'horreur en y songeant : une fièvre fort violente, grande oppression de poitrine, un furieux mal de tête, une toux sèche, de grands maux de cœur, et un cours de ventre qui le faisait aller à la selle à tous moments. Depuis le vendredi à midi, tout alla de bien en mieux ; son corps a été tout couvert de rougeole qui est ce qu'on peut désirer de mieux, que la nature ait la force de chasser au dehors le venin, qui sans cela saisis et opprime le cœur, en quoi consiste tout le péril. Le Roi, depuis l'heure que je dis, s'est senti lui-même entièrement dégagé . . . et pour vous faire mieux comprendre tout à la fois et de quelle humeur est notre maître et en quel état est sa santé, c'est que ce Prince, de la vie duquel les médecins n'auraient osé répondre le vendredi un quart d'heure avant midi, travailla à son accoutumé le samedi après dîner qui était hier, trois heures durant, à ses affaires, avec M. le Tellier et avec moi et nous sommes mandés pour y retourner aujourd'hui à la même heure, où je lirai à Sa Majesté votre dépêche du 28me, comme j'eus l'honneur de lui lire hier la précédente qui était du 24me.

[The King himself writes three days later:] Quoique mon mal n'ait, par la grâce de Dieu, guère duré, il a été assez violent pour m'ôter le moyen de répondre plus tôt à vos deux dernières dépêches. [And he at once resumes the discussion of the intended treatise, and his

inquiries as to the doings of Charles with the Spaniard, June 6, 1663.]

67. A PLAYFUL LETTER OF LOUIS.—*To Cominges, June 6, 1663.*—Je ne pensais pas d'avoir choisi un Espagnol pour lui confier toutes mes affaires en Angleterre et il faut que l'air de Londres soit bien puissant pour avoir rendu castillan en si peu de temps le cœur que je croyais le plus français et le plus zélé pour mon service. Je suis pourtant si incorrigible qu'encore que vous ayez tourné casaque, je ne veux pas changer mes premiers sentiments, et je suis résolu de m'abandonner avec la même confiance à ce cœur révolté ; j'ai même donné ordre ce matin au Sieur Colbert qu'il me présentât ce qui regarde votre subsistance, s'il n'a pas déjà été fait avant que vous m'en eussiez écrit. Continuez cependant à servir le Roi mon beau-père de la même façon que vous avez fait jusqu'ici et j'en serai très satisfait, tant j'ai d'affection pour ses intérêts.

68. LADY CASTLEMAINE AND MISS STEWART.—*Ruvigny to Louis, June 25, 1663.*—Ce parti [*i.e.*, the Castlemaine's] va déclinant ; il en est de même de Mad^e. de 'Castlemer' ; on n'y demeure plus que par habitude et on ne doute plus que Mlle. Stewart n'ait pris sa place. Elle ne communia point à la Pentecôte, qui est une marque assurée de leur dernière intelligence, à ce que m'ont dit les meilleurs catholiques. Il [*i.e.*, Charles] la voit le plus secrètement qu'il peut et c'est une des plus belles filles et des plus modestes qui se puisse voir.

69. SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE.—*Cominges to Lionne, June 25, 1663.*—Ledit Chevalier Temple est un homme d'autant plus dangereux qu'il a beaucoup d'esprit et de crédit. Il est fils d'un homme du même génie qui a toujours fait parler de lui dans son temps.

70. COURT NEWS.—*Cominges to Louis, July 5, 1663.*—Le Parlement est sur le point de se dissoudre avec la satisfaction de tout le monde. Sitôt après, le Roi partira pour Plymouth et viendra trouver la Reine aux eaux, qui est présentement dans les remèdes pour se préparer à les bien prendre et en tirer même quelque avantage pour le sujet que l'y mène. On espère que le Roi s'y trouvant sans distraction pourrait la ramener grosse.

[There has been of late a] grande querelle entre les Dames, jusque là que le Roi menaça la Dame où il soupe tous les soirs [*i.e.*, Lady Castlemaine] de ne mettre jamais le pied chez elle si la Demoiselle [*i.e.*, Miss Stewart] n'y était. Cela fait qu'elle ne la quitte plus.

71. BRISTOL'S SPEECH IN THE LOWER HOUSE.—*Ruvigny to Louis, July 16, 1663.*—[Charles and Bristol discuss the latter's harangue together.] La réponse du Comte de Bristol fut audacieuse ; son maître lui dit assez bénignement qu'il ferait un pauvre Roi s'il ne pouvait ranger un Comte de Bristol. Dieu préserve V. M. de pareils sujets et de si peu de puissance ! Le Roi d'Angleterre attendra la fin du Parlement qui durera encore quinze jours pour donner des ordres au Comte de Bristol, qui peut-être ne passeront pas la rigueur d'un commandement de se retirer de la Cour. Il a demandé au Roi son maître la permission d'accuser au Parlement M. le Chancelier du crime de lèse-majesté. Il lui a défendu, mais en même temps il lui a permis de lui dire tout ce qu'il savait contre lui. Il lui a répondu qu'il n'en pouvait parler qu'au Parlement.

Je sais qu'il a dit à un de ses amis . . . qu'assurément il accuserait le Chancelier au Parlement.

72. THANKS FOR COURT NEWS.—*Louis to Cominges, July 19, 1663.*—Je serai bien aise que vous continuiez à prendre soin, comme vous l'aviez commencé, de m'envoyer toujours un papier des nouvelles les plus curieuses de la Cour où vous êtes.

[And again :] J'ai reçu vos dépêches des 8me. et 11me. du courant avec le papier que vous y avez joint des avis de la Cour, que j'ai vu avec plaisir, comme j'en aurai beaucoup que vous continuiez à prendre le même soin sur les matières les plus importantes. July 21, 1663.

73. CLARENDON CHARGED WITH HIGH TREASON BY BRISTOL.—*Cominges to Louis, July 23, 1663.*—Rien ne me paraît plus surprenant, ni plus extraordinaire que l'affaire dont j'ai à entretenir Votre Majesté, et je suis assuré qu'Elle n'en sera pas peu surprise, quand il faudra, pour en trouver des exemples qu'Elle réfléchisse sa mémoire au siècle des violences de Sylla, des emportements des Gracches et

de l'accusation que fit César (qui n'était alors que particulier) contre Dolabella qui exerçait la plus haute magistrature. . . .

[Various persons interpose to stop Bristol, but in vain.] Si jusques ici V. M. a vu la conduite d'un homme présomptueux que la vanité avait aveuglé, Elle le va voir maintenant comme un chien enragé qui s'attaque indifféremment à tout le monde.

[Bristol concludes his speech, saying] que, après cette action, il était tout prêt de sacrifier sa vie à son maître, et de tendre son estomac à l'épée de Monsieur le Duc d'York. . . .

Voilà un procès dans les formes, entre un particulier et le Chancelier appuyé de sa dignité, de ses services, de la bonne volonté, du Roi, et celle de la Reine-mère, du Duc d'York (dont Madame sa femme accoucha hier d'un garçon) de tous les courtisans : et cependant il se promène sur le pavé comme un autre et ne désespère pas d'un bon succès. J'avoue à Votre Majesté que je perds la tramontane et que je crois être plus loin que le cercle de la lune.

74. PERSONAL FREEDOM IN ENGLAND.—BRISTOL.—*Cominges to Lionne, July 23, 1663.*—Vous verrez dans la dépêche que je fais à S. M. les vapeurs qui s'élevèrent sur le soir, qui se convertirent le vendredi en foudres et en tempête. Je vous avoue, Monsieur, que rien au monde n'est plus surprenant que ce qui se voit en cette Cour et qui tombe moins sous le sens d'un homme nourri sous une autre politique et sous d'autres lois. Je m'imagine à tout moment être transporté aux antipodes, quand je vois un particulier se promener par les rues, assister comme juge dans le Parlement, être visité de sa cabale et n'en pas faire une moins bonne vie après avoir accusé de crimes capitaux le premier officier de l'Etat parfaitement bien auprès du Roi son maître, appuyé de la Reine-mère et beau-père du fils de la maison.

[Clarendon, however, causes Bellings to write to Lionne to say] qu'il espérait que vous n'auriez pas plus mauvaise opinion de lui après ces accusations (July 24, 1663).

75. A LITERARY DINNER AT THE FRENCH EMBASSY ; HUYGENS, HOBBS, AND SORBIÈRES.—*Cominges to Lionne, July 23, 1663.*—Dans deux jours Messieurs de 'Zulchom,' 'd'Hobbes,' et de

Sorbières doivent dîner chez moi : ce ne sera pas sans parler de vous après que nous aurons fait le panégérique de notre maître. Le bonhomme Mr. Hobbes est amoureux de Sa personne ; il me fait tous les jours mille demandes sur Son sujet, qui finissent toujours par une exclamation et par des souhaits dignes de lui. Comme souvent il a pris envie à S. M. de faire du bien à ces sortes de gens, je ne craindrai pas de dire que jamais il ne peut être mieux employé que en celui-ci. On peut le nommer *Assertor Regum*, comme il paraît par ses œuvres, mais du nôtre il en fait son héros. Si tout cela pouvait attirer quelque libéralité, je vous prie que je puisse en être le distributeur ; je la saurai bien faire valoir, et je ne crois pas que jamais bienfait puisse être mieux colloqué.-

76. PERSONAL LIBERTY.—BRISTOL.—*Cominges to Lionne, July 26, 1663.*—Cependant le Comte de Bristol joue tous les jours au ‘Boulaingrain,’ et le jour même qu’il causa tout ce sabat, il maria son fils aîné, homme de moindre que médiocre talent à la fille d’un avocat, grand ami de feu Cromwell, qui lui donne dix mille jacobus argent comptant, dix mille à la naissance du premier enfant, et dix mille après sa mort, qui est un grand mariage, surtout n’ayant qu’un fils qui peut mourir.

77. THE LITERARY DINNER AT THE FRENCH EMBASSY.—*Lionne to Cominges, Aug. 1, 1663.*—Je voudrais bien avoir pu faire le quatrième de vos convives en ce dîner que vous deviez donner à Messieurs de Zulichem, Hobbes, et de Sorbières. Je vois grande disposition au Roi de gratifier le second, mais n’engagez point Sa Majesté à rien que je ne vous le mande plus précisément. Si on prend la résolution de lui donner quelque chose, il ne passera que par vos mains. Sa Majesté s’en est déjà expliquée de la sorte.

78. BRISTOL.—LIONNE’S ASTONISHMENT.—*Lionne to Cominges, Aug. 5, 1663.*—J’admire de plus en plus la hardiesse, pour ne pas dire pis, du Comte de Bristol, et que l’on ne puisse rien lui dire ni lui rien faire. Si quelqu’un avait attaqué ici M. le Chancelier au Parlement, vous croyez bien qu’il ne jouerait pas tous les jours au boulaingrain et qu’il y aurait peu de presse d’avoir son alliance.

79. LOUIS'S THIRST FOR INFORMATION.—*Lionne to Cominges, Aug. 5, 1663.*—Quoique je fasse toujours voir au Roi les lettres particulières dont vous m'honorez et qu'il semblerait, cela étant, que ce fut la même chose d'écrire à S. M. ou à moi, puisqu'Elle est toujours également bien informée, il faut, s'il vous plaît, écrire toujours directement à S. M., quand même vous n'auriez d'autre chose à lui mander que de l'avertir que vous n'en avez aucune matière, et à moi seulement trois lignes pour l'adresse du paquet. Ce qui m'a fait juger qu'il vaut mieux en user de la sorte, c'est que, quand j'ai lu à S. M. la dernière lettre dont vous m'avez favorisé, Elle me demanda pourquoi vous n'écriviez pas plutôt à Elle ; à quoi je répartis que c'était peut être par défaut de matière assez importante . . . mais il me sembla que S. M. ne se paya pas entièrement de cette raison et qu'Elle aimait mieux que vous en usassiez autrement. Vous lui ferez aussi grand plaisir de continuer ce que vous aviez commencé si galamment, en lui envoyant dans un feuillet séparé les nouvelles de la Cour les plus curieuses.

80. THE BRISTOL AFFAIR.—DISQUIET IN THE PROVINCES.—*Cominges to Louis, Aug. 9, 1663.*—Quelques personnes assez sensées . . . ne seraient point d'avis que l'on poussât cette affaire que, premièrement l'on eût un peu apaisé et séparé les cabales des provinces, qui avaient alarmé la Cour au point que j'ai vu M. le Duc de 'Bouquinkan' prêt à monter à cheval pour s'en aller dans la duché d'York qui est son Gouvernement et quelques autres seigneurs aussi ; néanmoins il fut retardé par le Roi. J'étais chez lui quand il en reçut l'ordre.

81. A PURCHASE OF ARABS FOR THE GALLEYS.—*Lionne to Cominges, Aug. 12, 1663.*—L'abbé de Montaigne . . . nous assure de la prise de trois mille maures. En tout cas, s'il se trouvait qu'il eût dit vrai, le Roi voudrait bien que vous fissiez en sorte que le Roi d'Angleterre lui fît présent d'une partie de ces maures pour mettre dans ses galères et qu'il lui vendît l'autre ; ou qu'enfin si vous ne pouviez obtenir de gratification, vous fissiez en sorte d'avoir tous ces maures ou la meilleure partie pour de l'argent. Il faudrait toujours assurer qu'il ne les donnera pas à d'autres et après nous nous défendrons du prix, et quand même il n'y en aurait que le nombre que vous avez mandé, on ne laissera pas d'y entendre.

82. TUNBRIDGE WELLS.—*Cominges' Sheet of Court News, Aug., 1663.*—La solitude se trouve maintenant dans l'une des plus grandes villes du monde. L'on n'y voit ni dames ni courtisans, les seigneurs s'étant retirés et, sans avoir aucune complaisance pour ceux qui restent, ils ont emmené leurs femmes.

La Reine, avec sa cour, qui est assez nombreuse, est toujours à Tunbridge où les eaux n'ont rien produit de ce que l'on avait espéré. On peut les nommer les eaux de scandale, puisqu'elles ont pensé ruiner les femmes et les filles de réputation (j'entends celles qui n'avaient pas leurs maris). Il a fallu un mois entier et à quelques unes davantage, pour justifier leur conduite et mettre leur honneur à couvert, et même l'on dit qu'il s'en trouve encore quelques unes qui ne sont pas hors d'affaire. Cela fait que la Cour reviendra dans huit jours après avoir laissé une des dames de la Reine pour les gages.

L'on séjournera ici quelques jours pour se refaire et pour prendre de nouvelles forces pour le voyage des bains [Bath] qui sont à 80 milles d'ici. Enfin on veut tenter toute sorte de moyens pour donner un successeur à l'Angleterre, le Roi contribuant de sa part tout ce que l'on peut demander d'une véritable affection et d'une assiduité régulière.

[Somewhat later] les médecins mandèrent que la Reine était grosse, mais nous apprenons à leur honte qu'ils se sont grossièrement trompés. [The symptoms] étaient un pur effet des eaux qu'elle prend, qui sont vitriolées et par conséquent excitent le vomissement.

83. COURT NEWS.—GRAMONT.—*Cominges' Sheet of Court News, Aug., 1663.*—Le chevalier de Gramont continue sa manière ordinaire dans la galanterie, qui est de faire plus de bruit que de besogne . . . [Il] est tellement satisfait et content des avantages qu'il a tirés de la galanterie qu'il en veut faire le fondement de sa conduite pour le reste de ses jours. Mais comme il a très bien jugé que son âge devenait un très grand obstacle à tous ses plaisirs imaginaires, il a résolu de s'en établir de solides par le mariage. Pour cet effet, il a jeté les yeux sur une belle et jeune demoiselle de la maison d'Hamilton, nièce du duc d'Ormond, ornée de toutes les grâces de la vertu et de la noblesse, mais telle-

ment disgraciée du côté des biens de la fortune que ceux qui lui donnent le plus ne lui donnent rien.

Je crois que le chevalier, dans le commencement n'avait pas dessein de pousser l'affaire si loin ; mais, soit que la conversation ait achevé ce qu'avait commencé la beauté, ou que le bruit qu'ont fait deux frères assez facheux y ait ajouté quelque chose, sa déclaration s'est faite publiquement. Le Roi y donne son consentement et, en faveur du prétendu mariage, laisse espérer fonder la cuisine, par quelque pension ou autres moyens, si l'occasion s'en présente.

Cependant, comme j'ai vu que ce mariage se rendait le sujet de la raillerie de toute la Cour, et que chacun en parlait selon son caprice, je me suis hasardé de faire mes efforts pour le rompre ou du moins le détourner pour quelque temps, mais le tout fort inutilement, et je ne vois plus de remède à un mal résolu, conseillé par un aveugle et exécuté par un malade. Il m'a voulu faire passer mille faux raisonnements pour bons que je n'ai pas voulu recevoir ; il en a fait de même des miens, et le temps lui apprendra lesquels sont les meilleurs. Je souhaite pour son repos que ce soient les siens, mais il n'y a guère d'apparence.

84. THE THIRD AND FIFTH MONARCHY.—*Cominges to Lionne, Sept. 27, 1663.*—Depuis six jours l'on enterra un ministre de l'opinion de la troisième monarchie, qui fut accompagné de plus de dix mille hommes. . . .

[Lionne having inquired what was the third monarchy, Cominges answers] : Ce n'est pas sans raison que vous me demandez quelque éclaircissement sur l'opinion de la troisième monarchie. Elle n'a d'autre auteur ni d'autre sectateur que mon secrétaire ou moi, qui, par surdité ou par méprise, lui avons donné l'être. Mais je l'étouffe en son berceau et adopte en sa place la cinquième monarchie, qui est celle des justes, sous laquelle le monde doit finir, assez semblable à l'opinion des millénaires, auxquels se joignent les anabaptistes, les "Kakers," et beaucoup d'autres extravagants. . . . Ce furent ces gens qui rendirent si célèbre la pompe funèbre du prédicant. (Oct. 15, 1663.)

85. BRISTOL'S POPULARITY.—*Cominges to Lionne, Oct. 8, 1663.*—La Cour sera ici jeudi avec tout le conseil. Je ne sais si elle fera

cesser le bruit qui court que le comte de Bristol est dans la ville, et l'insolence du peuple qui boit à sa santé publiquement, comme au champion de la patrie.

86. A TUSCAN ENVOY.—*Cominges to Lionne, Oct. 8, 1663.*—Pour l'Envoyé de Toscane . . . il a paru ici comme un homme interdit et peu accoutumé à l'emploi qu'il avait. . . . Jamais marchand de la Rue aux fers qui se marie n'eut un habit de si belle ni de si bouffante étoffe ; avec cela le bas de laine mal tiré, un grand collet tout simple et de fort grandes plumes blanches.

87. A ROYAL VISIT TO OXFORD.—*Cominges to Louis, Oct. 16, 1663.*—La Cour n'est point de retour de son progrès ; c'est ainsi que l'on parle ici. Elle doit arriver aujourd'hui à Oxford où elle doit séjourner quatre jours dans les divertissements que peut donner une université, dont les acteurs ne sont pas pour l'ordinaire de la plus agréable ni de la meilleure compagnie du monde. L'on parle de diverses comédies, de plusieurs harangues, de panégyriques, d'épithalames où le grec, le latin, l'hébreu, l'arabe, le syriaque seront les langues les plus connues. Je suis assuré qu'après tous ces mauvais divertissements l'on sera bien aise de retourner à Whitehall pour en prendre de plus agréables.

88. LOUIS'S OPINION OF THE GRAND COUNCIL OF SPAIN.—*Louis to Cominges, Oct. 17, 1663.*—Ce conseil d'Espagne qui s'attribue la qualité d'éternel parce qu'il ne change jamais de maximes et va toujours constamment à son but jusqu'à ce qu'il y soit parvenu, du moins à l'égard des Puissances inférieures, car, avec l'aide de Dieu, il m'a réussi de mettre un peu en désordre ces grandes maximes, ce conseil, dis-je. . . .

89. FRENCH QUARREL WITH ROME.—*Louis to Cominges, Oct. 17, 1663.*—Il n'est pas vrai qu'on ait trouvé aucun interdit contre ce Royaume dans les papiers du vice-légat. On a bien dit, après sa retraite, qu'il avait ordre d'interdire la ville d'Avignon en partant, mais on lui en a ôté le moyen en le surprenant, bien que, quand il aurait eu la commodité de jeter cette censure, elle n'aurait eu nul effet, et aurait été mal exécutée.

90. SALE OF SLAVES BY THE ROYAL GUINEA COMPANY.—*Cominges*

so *Lionne*, Oct. 18, 1663.—Comme le principal commerce de cette Compagnie consiste en esclaves, j'ai cru vous en devoir donner avis, parce que l'on nous en fournirait en peu de temps ce qui nous serait nécessaire pour renforcer la chiourme de nos galères. Mais je vous dirai aussi que, bien que ce soient de grands et de forts hommes, que je les soupçonnerais bien peu propres à la rame; et, de plus, ils sont si opiniâtres qu'ils se laissent mourir très volontiers plutôt que de travailler. En tous cas, si vous le jugez à propos, l'on pourrait en essayer une centaine et, par ceux là, juger des autres.

91. LOUIS'S COOLING CARD TO COMINGES.—Oct. 28, 1663.—Quand vous reprendrez vos conférences, ayez toujours bien présent à l'esprit ce que je vous ai tant recommandé, de traiter avec grande modération, sans chaleur ni emportement. Je sais que cela est difficile à un zèle ardent comme le vôtre, qui trouve aux autres une manière de négocier fort désagréable; mais vous aurez d'autant plus de mérite d'avoir pu vous contenir, et votre prudence en éclatera davantage, même parmi eux, puisqu'ils verront assez que, si vous voulez bien souffrir leurs hauteurs, ce n'est pas le mauvais état de mes affaires qui m'y oblige.

92. CHARACTER OF CHARLES II.—ILLNESS OF HIS WIFE.—*Cominges* so *Louis*, Nov. 1, 1663.—Je sors présentement de Whitehall, où j'ai laissé la Reine dans un état où, selon le jugement des médecins, il y a peu de chose à espérer. Elle a reçu l'extrême onction ce matin. . . .

Les Portugais sont ici en fort mauvaise odeur et l'Ambassadeur n'est pas exempt de calomnies. On les accuse, et lui principalement, d'avoir contribué par sa mauvaise conduite à la mort de la Reine, lui ayant fait passer deux nuits sans dormir, l'une à faire son testament et l'autre à recevoir les adieux de tous ses domestiques. Il est vrai que, pour la satisfaire, l'on la laissa trois ou quatre jours entre leurs mains, mais le Roi ayant reconnu qu'ils contribuaient à son mal et même qu'ils lui faisaient prendre beaucoup de remèdes de leur pays, rompit ce commerce.

Nonobstant les petits relaches qu'elle a de temps en temps, je désespère tout-à-fait de sa personne. . . . Le Roi me paraît fort

affligé. Il soupa néanmoins hier au soir chez Madame de Castlemaine et eut ses conversations ordinaires avec Mademoiselle Stewart dont il est fort amoureux. L'on parle déjà de le marier. Chacun lui donne une femme selon son inclination et il s'en trouve qui ne la cherchent pas hors d'Angleterre.

93. BREACH OF ETIQUETTE AT THE LORD MAYOR'S.—*Cominges to Louis, Nov. 9, 1663.*—Le maître des cérémonies prit le soin de venir me prendre à huit heures, afin de me faire voir le commencement de la cérémonie, qui se fait sur l'eau. De là il me conduisit dans la grande rue où il m'avait fait préparer une chambre, afin que plus commodément je visse la cavalcade qui ne fut pas si tôt passée que je montai en carrosse pour prendre les devants par les rues détournées. J'arrivai une demi-heure devant le Maire ; je fus reçu à la maison de ville avec tout l'accueil imaginable ; l'on m'ouvrit la porte pour faire entrer mes carrosses ; je fus salué de la pique et du drapeau par les officiers qui se trouvèrent à ma descente. Incontinent, je fus reçu par d'autres bourgeois qui me remirent sous la conduite d'autres, et ainsi de lieu en lieu, l'on me conduisit jusques à la salle du festin, où je trouvai M. le Chancelier et le Conseil du Roi qui étaient déjà à table. Je fus surpris de cette grossière incivilité. Néanmoins, pour éviter de faire une affaire, je pris le parti de donner lieu à ces Messieurs de réparer cette faute si elle s'était faite par ignorance ou par mégarde, ou d'éluder leur malice par un procédé franc et hardi. Je marchai droit à eux, à dessein de leur faire une raillerie de leur bon appétit ; mais je les trouvai si froids et si interdits que je jugeai à propos de me retirer, le Chancelier et tous les assistants ne s'étant pas seulement levés pour me recevoir, à la réserve de Bennet, qui me dit quelque chose à quoi je répondis avec mépris.

94. EXCUSES OF THE LORD MAYOR.—*Cominges to Louis, Nov. 12, 1663.*—Le lendemain à 11 heures, on m'avertit que le Maire était parti pour me faire visite ; il arriva un moment après, suivi de dix ou douze carrosses et une assez grande troupe de peuple qui suivit ce cortège par curiosité. Il entra chez moi avec les marques de sa dignité, c'est-à-dire, l'épée [etc., etc.]. Il arrêta un moment dans ma salle basse, peut-être en intention que je l'y allasse rece-

voir, mais un de mes secrétaires lui ayant dit qu'il y avait du feu dans la salle haute et que je n'étais pas achevé d'habiller, ayant employé toute la matinée à faire mes dépêches, il monta en haut, et sitôt je l'allai prendre, pour le conduire dans ma salle d'audience. Je ne voulus point l'entendre qu'il ne fut assis. D'abord il me témoigna, qu'il était bien fâché qu'il ne pouvait s'expliquer en français, mais qu'il avait amené un interprète. . . .

Je conduisis le Maire jusques à son carrosse, lui donnant toujours la porte, mais conservant toujours la main droite. Le tout se passa avec satisfaction des deux côtés.

95. THE GUILDHALL BANQUET.—ANOTHER COOLING CARD TO COMINGES.—*Louis to Cominges, Nov. 18, 1663.*—Avant toutes choses, je veux vous témoigner, pour votre satisfaction, que je reconnais fort bien que ce qui vous est arrivé est un de ces incidents que toute la prudence humaine ne saurait prévoir ni empêcher, et que vous aviez même pris vos précautions et toutes vos suretés au delà de ce qui paraissait nécessaire ; comme aussi que j'ai entièrement approuvé tout ce que vous avez fait depuis la chose arrivée. . . .

Après cela je vous dirai deux choses touchant l'accommodement de cette affaire, l'une que je le désire et ai intérêt de le désirer . . . afin que les Espagnols ne puissent prendre aucun avantage de cette petite brouillerie . . . la seconde que, comme il ne paraît pas qu'il y ait eu aucun dessein formé de vous faire une supercherie ou une injure. . . . je ne crois pas que mon honneur m'oblige à désirer les mêmes réparations que je devrais demander si je voyais qu'il y eût eu un dessein prémédité de m'offenser en votre personne,—outre que l'état de mes affaires, ni mon humeur, que je pense que l'on connaît assez désormais n'être pas fort souffrante, ne laissera à mon sens aucune impression dans le monde à mon désavantage, quand je ne pousserai pas ma satisfaction au dernier point où je la pourrai faire aller, si je m'étais bien mis dans l'esprit de le prétendre.

J'ai déjà souvent déclaré, touchant les démêlés que j'ai avec la Cour de Rome qu'il n'est pas au pouvoir des Rois et potentats d'empêcher qu'il n'arrive parfois des inconvénients dans leur Etat par des cas fortuits que toute la prévoyance des hommes ne saurait empêcher.

96. COMINGES IN IDLENESS.—*To Louis, Dec. 3, 1663.*—Ces grands événements qui changent souvent la face des Etats, qui font parler les moins éloquentes et qui donnent de la matière aux Ambassadeurs d'entretenir leurs maîtres ne sont pas des fruits de la paix ni de l'oisiveté dans laquelle il semble que cette Cour soit ensevelie. Comme elle n'a présentement aucune affaire qui la presse au dehors, elle ne s'occupe qu'aux choses du dedans, sans faire réflexion que les avenues bien gardées laissent dormir le camp en repos. L'on n'y voit rien de nouveau et à peine le soleil, qui est aussi vieux que le monde, y laisse-t-il entrevoir sa lumière.

97. COMINGES'S CLASSICAL TASTES.—*To Lionne, Dec. 3, 1663.*—[Cominges finds himself in a country] où l'oisiveté règne comme dans son trône. Si je n'aimais l'étude, je serais le plus malheureux de tous les hommes, mais je fais conversation avec tous les plus honnêtes gens de l'antiquité, qui ont assez de complaisance pour souffrir que je les quitte et les reprenne, sans leur faire civilité ni excuses. Ce qui me console, c'est que je ne me ruine point avec eux et que, sans les apauvrir, je puis m'enrichir de leurs dépouilles, qui me rendront dignes de paraître un jour devant vous en assez bon équipage.

98. BARGAINING FOR SLAVES WITH THE GUINEA COMPANY.—*Cominges to Louis, Dec. 3, 1663.*—J'ai demandé cent hommes depuis l'âge de 27 ans jusques à 35, sains de leurs corps et entiers de leurs membres, rendus à Toulon ; et l'on demande deux cents écus la pièce, la moitié de la somme payée à l'avance à Londres le jour du traité, et l'autre à Toulon, remettant les esclaves, me voulant encore rendre garant des risques de la mer, qui feraient naître l'occasion de mille chicanes. Je ne vois pas que ce parti soit à recevoir puisque, à Ligourne, l'on peut en avoir à cent écus et quatre cents francs et sans comparaison meilleurs.

99. PROPHECYING.—*Cominges to Lionne, Dec. 10, 1663.*—Voici le pays des prophètes ; nous avons un autre Jérémie que ne parle que de feux et de flammes : on l'a mis en prison. L'autre dit qu'il a eu une vision de Dieu par laquelle il lui a fait voir le jour du jugement, le lieu et le nombre et la qualité des prédestinés : celui-

là s'est contenté de six Jacobus pour aller prêcher ces révélations hors de Londres.

100. COMINGES IN A GRAVER MOOD.—*To Lionne, Dec. 24, 1663.*—Mon âge ne me permet plus ces inutiles occupations, et ce qui me reste de temps à vivre, je veux l'employer à mourir, regardant le passé pour le détester, et l'avenir pour l'éternité. Que vous semble, Monsieur, de ces réflexions? Ne sont elles pas chrétiennes et ne valent elles pas mieux que celles de certaines gens qui, à cinquante ans, volent le papillon et vont se brûler à la moindre lumière, qui les éblouit? Je n'ai que trop longtemps suivi de si mauvais exemples.

101. CONVERSION OF THE LADY CASTLEMAINE.—*Cominges to Lionne, Dec. 31, 1663.*—Le mariage du Chevalier de Gramont et la conversion de Madame de Castlemaine se sont publiés en même jour, et le Roi d'Angleterre étant prié par les parents de la Dame d'apporter quelque obstacle à cette action, il répondit glamment que, pour l'âme des Dames, il ne s'en mêlait point.

102. GRAMONT ALTERED FOR THE WORSE.—*Cominges to Lionne, Jan. 28, 1665.*—M. le Chevalier de Gramont est arrivé depuis deux mois; il n'a point changé depuis le mariage, si ce n'est qu'il est devenu le plus effronté menteur du monde.

103. ENGLISH POLITICS.—*Cominges to Louis, Feb. 4, 1664.*—Si Aristote, qui s'est mêlé de définir jusqu'aux moindres choses de la politique revenait au monde, il ne saurait trouver des termes pour expliquer ce gouvernement. Véritablement, le monarchique y paraît sous le nom du Roi; mais, dans le fait, rien moins que cela. . . . Savoir, si la raison en provient des lois fondamentales du royaume ou du peu d'application du monarque, c'est là où git la difficulté. . . . Il est vrai que la disposition des lois de ce royaume a mis un tel tempérament entre le Roi et ses sujets qu'il semble qu'ils soient joints par des liens indissolubles et que la séparation de l'une des parties entraîne la ruine de l'autre.

[Charles is far too kind.] La Cour est divisée en quatre ou cinq cabales. Le Roi qui devrait les dissiper toutes. . . . se trouve à la tête de la plus faible. [Women play such a part in everything]

que l'on peut dire que les Anglais sont véritablement esclaves de leurs femmes et de leurs maîtresses.

104. FANSHAW'S DEPARTURE FOR SPAIN AS AMBASSADOR.—*Cominges to Lionne, Feb. 4, 1664.*—Il y a quatre jours que M. Fancho est parti pour son Ambassade d'Espagne, dans un des plus superbes vaisseaux du Roi son maître. Je crois que, par vanité, il voulut passer devant ma porte, afin que je visse son cortège qui l'a accompagné jusqu'à son bord. Il était dans un carrosse du Roi, escorté de douze hommes à cheval et suivi de vingt carrosses à six chevaux. Il emmène un équipage de Jean de Paris, sans parler de quantité de jeunes gentilshommes qui l'accompagnent par curiosité. Le Roi lui a fait donner, en prêt seulement, quatre tentures de fort belle tapisserie et quantité de vases et autres ustensiles en vermeil doré. . . . Le peuple qui le suivait en foule, témoigna beaucoup de joie à son embarquement et fit de grands vœux pour l'heureux succès de sa négociation.

105. BEATING PREVIOUS RECORDS IN A JOURNEY TO BANTAM.—*Cominges to Lionne, Feb. 21, 1664.*—Depuis trois ou quatre jours est arrivé aux Dunes un navire qui vient de 'Bantan' et qui a fait un voyage dans l'espace d'un an, chose inouïe jusqu'à présent.

106. CHARACTER OF THE DUCHESS OF YORK.—*Cominges to Louis, April 7, 1664.*—Le chancelier. . . a un très puissant second en Madame la Duchesse d'York sa fille, qui est aussi brave femme—le mot d'honnête ne m'a pas semblé assez fort,—que j'en aie connu de ma vie, et qui soutient avec autant de courage, d'adresse et de fermeté le poste où elle est que si elle était du sang des rois, ou du moins Gusman ou Mendoce.

107. SCURVY.—*Cominges to Lionne, April 17, 1664.*—Le séjour de ce pays ici ne vaut rien. . . J'y suis quasi devenu paralytique et je suis particulièrement attaqué d'une maladie que l'on appelle scorbut qui est ici fort ordinaire. Toutes les dents me branlent et l'on me fait espérer que ce ne sera rien, et que j'en serai quitte à cette fois pour cinq ou six. La consolation n'est-elle pas agréable ? Après y avoir fait réflexion, j'ai trouvé que, si j'étais malade plus de

quatre fois, que je m'en retournerais sans une seule dent dans la bouche.

108. THE EARL OF PEMBROKE PROPHECYING.—TENEBRÆ AT THE FRENCH EMBASSY.—*Cominges to Lienne, April 17, 1664.*—La curiosité que j'ai de prendre quelque connaissance des choses qui se passent dans le monde m'a attiré les visites du Comte de Pembroke. . . . Ce seigneur, qui n'a non plus de malice qu'un mouton. . . . est tellement plein et coiffé de toutes les révélations dont je vous ai entretenu ces jours passés, et a une telle envie que chacun soit aussi égaré de bon sens qu'il l'est, qu'il emploie toute sa plus fine rhétorique à me jeter dans son parti. . . . Il est convaincu que vous êtes un parfaitement honnête homme, capable des plus grandes choses, mais il dit que ces grandes qualités ne suffisent pas, et que beaucoup d'excellents personnages qui les possèdent traitent le plus souvent toutes les prophéties de ridicules. Je lui avouai sincèrement que je vous croyais un peu touché de cette maladie, et que l'on aurait assez de peine à réduire votre esprit à une soumission aveugle. . . . Voilà le seul divertissement que j'aie en Angleterre, mais s'il continue je suis résolu de quitter la ville. . . . ces fols s'étant mis dans la tête de me persécuter et de me vouloir ériger en prophète, qui, dans le bon sens, n'est autre chose que de courir les rues, faire beaucoup de grimaces, répondre hors de propos par monosyllabes, lever les yeux aux ciel, n'ôter point son chapeau et être fort malpropre. . . .

C'est trop faire le fol dans la semaine sainte : il faut du moins mettre quelque intervalle entre ces folies et les ténèbres que je vais ouïr. Le Roi m'a fait l'honneur de me prêter sa musique française, qui attire chez moi beaucoup de beau monde, et principalement madame de Castlemaine, que je vas régaler de mon mieux.

109. REPUBLICAN POSSIBILITIES.—*Cominges to Louis, May 5, 1664.*—Si elle [*i.e.* the war against the Dutch] a un mauvais succès, ils ne manqueront jamais de renouveler la mémoire des avantages qu'ils ont emportés sur les Hollandais durant le temps de l'interrègne, en attribuant cette différence à la nature du gouvernement. Ils pourraient bien vouloir goûter une deuxième fois de la République, ce qui ne peut se faire sans bouleverser toute l'économie de l'Etat.

110. AMERICA.—*Cominges to Louis, June 9, 1664.*—[The Royal Guinea Company] fournit par le moyen de ses esclaves de quoi faire valoir l'Amérique, que les Anglais regardent aujourd'hui comme leur fin principale.

111. COMING OF THE LEGATE TO APOLOGISE FOR THE CRÉQUI OUTRAGE.—*Cominges to Lionne, June 19, 1664.*—Jouissez donc à loisir de la vue de Monseigneur de Légat qui vous fera, si je ne me trompe, un très favorable accueil, ayant autant travaillé que vous avez fait à sa mission. Sans ingratitude il ne saurait vous refuser un bon nombre d'indulgences et de grains bénits puisque, après les emportements de sa famille, et la fermeté du Roi, il vous doit l'honneur d'un si beau et si magnifique emploi. S'il vous en tombe sous la main—je ne dis pas des emplois—je n'en veux pas de si ruineux—envoyez m'en une bonne quantité, car voici un pays où l'on peut les employer, bien que la plus grande partie des hommes et des femmes qui l'habitent n'en fassent guère d'état.

112. SUFFERINGS OF THE IRISH.—*Cominges to Lionne, June 23, 1664.*—Le Roi de la Grande Bretagne, qui est naturellement très bon et très juste souhaiterait qu'un chacun eût sujet de se louer et pas un de se plaindre, mais de quelque biais que l'on regarde l'affaire, elle est si remplie de difficultés et si embrouillée par tant d'actes du Parlement et par l'engagement que le Roi a fait de sa parole, dans le traité de son retour, qu'il est impossible de trouver un expédient d'en sortir à la satisfaction des parties intéressées, conservant le droit aux uns et la justice aux autres. . . . Les chassés sont faibles et les possesseurs puissants, ce qui assure pour jamais la ruine totale et sans ressources de cette malheureuse nation, qui pait l'herbe par la campagne et qui n'a plus d'autres retraites que les bois et les cavernes; cependant que leurs ennemis, plus criminels qu'eux, triomphent de leur perte, et s'enrichissent de leurs dépouilles.

113. SORBIÈRES EXILED FOR HIS BOOK ON ENGLAND.—*Cominges to Lionne, July 16, 1664.*—La relégation du Sieur Sorbières en Basse Bretagne a été fort bien imaginée, car nous n'en avons point de bonne et véritable relation : il pourra s'occuper à la faire et même à en apprendre la langue qui, paraissant si barbare, ne laisse pas d'avoir des beautés particulières.

114. CHARLES CATCHES COLD IN THE DOCKYARDS.—*Cominges to Lionne, July 17, 1664.*—Vous saurez qu'il y a quatre ou cinq jours que le Roi avec les Reines allèrent en berges voir les vaisseaux qui sont sortis du port de Chatham et que, durant la grande ardeur du soleil, le Roi quitta sa perruque et son pourpoint. A son retour, il se trouva fort enrhumé, ce qui obligea les médecins de le faire saigner. Le lendemain il se trouva avec un peu de fièvre et ce matin il a beaucoup sué et se trouve fort soulagé.

115. HAPPY RESULTS OF SORBIÈRES'S EXILE.—*Cominges to Louis, July 21, 1664.*—Sur l'avis que j'ai eu que quelques messieurs de l'Académie [*i.e.* the Royal Society] aussi indiscrets que le Sr. de Sorbières aiguisaient leur plume pour faire réponse, j'en ai parlé au Roi de la Grande Bretagne, qui m'a promis de leur faire commander de finir leur entreprise et de lui en apporter les matériaux qu'ils avaient préparés, sur peine de punition. Si cette escarmouche commençait, elle ne finirait jamais et ne ferait qu'irriter les deux nations qui ne s'aiment déjà pas trop, et qui ont plus de besoin d'être radoucies par une bonne conduite qu'aigries par des reproches et des injures.

116. ARRIVAL OF LA BELLE COMINGES.—*Cominges to Lionne, Aug. 18, 1664.*—Madame de Cominges est arrivée en bonne santé; elle a fait aujourd'hui ses premières visites. Le Roi, les Reines, Monsieur le Duc et Madame la Duchesse l'envoyèrent visiter le même jour de son arrivée et, depuis, le Roi, le Duc et les plus qualifiés de la Cour lui ont fait l'honneur de la voir. Je vous assure qu'elle ne fera point de honte à la nation. Je lui ai fait une petite réprimande afin que sa dépense extraordinaire ne tirât pas à conséquence pour l'avenir, et si, pour cette occasion, je n'en ai pas été fâché, ains au contraire le plus aise du monde, le Roi paiera tout quand il lui plaira.

117. STONES FROM INDIA.—*Cominges to Louis, Aug. 18, 1664.*—Les vaisseaux qui sont venus des Indes et principalement les deux derniers, sont chargés d'assez bonne marchandise, ainsi qu'il paraît par l'inventaire, mais, pour les présents envoyés au Roi, que l'on faisait si magnifiques, il m'a fait l'honneur de me les montrer pour s'en divertir. Ils sont contenus dans une petite bourse de satin

rouge cramoisi. Il y a un caillou jaune deux fois aussi gros que le Sancy, d'une assez belle forme pour valoir un million, mais je crois qu'il serait bien payé à un écu blanc. Il y a une autre pierre rouge, que l'on nomme escarboucle qui me paraît assez belle, mais j'en ai vu plusieurs semblables sur des reliquaires, ce qui me fait croire qu'elles ne sont pas de grand prix. Un saphir blanc et bleu, admirablement beau pour faire une bague d'évêque accompagne une fort grosse perle que le Roi a donnée à la Reine, que la nature avait eu dessein de faire ronde et blanche, mais elle n'a pas réussi.

118. MADAME DE COMINGES UNWELL.—*Cominges to Lionne, Sept. 1, 1664.*—Madame de Cominges pensa hier mourir d'une colique la plus violente du monde, ce qui se peut juger par les contorsions et évanouissements qu'elle produisit. Aujourd'hui elle se porte mieux. Néanmoins, me trouvant obligé de me tenir auprès d'elle pour la faire soulager, je n'ai guère de temps pour vous écrire. [She recovers and then] elle se porte si bien qu'elle est tous les jours en fête. Hier au soir Madame de Castlemaine lui fit un régal le plus magnifique du monde, où le Roi fit les honneurs de la maison plutôt en maître qu'en convive. (Sept. 15, 1664).

119. GRAMONT REJUVENATED BY THE BIRTH OF A SON.—*Cominges to Lionne, Sept. 8, 1664.*—Madame la Comtesse de Gramont accoucha hier d'un fils beau comme la mère et galant comme le père. Toute la Cour s'en est réjouie avec le Comte que j'en trouve tout rajeuni; mais je crois que l'espérance de retourner bientôt en France a effacé les rides de ses yeux et de son front et a fait naître les lys et les roses.

120. CHARLES ENTERTAINED BY COMINGES.—*Cominges to Lionne, Sept. 22, 1664.*—Le Roi avec les principaux de la Cour soupe aujourd'hui céans. Les Dames sont de la partie, que je régèlerai de violons et de musique et autres divertissements du pays. Toutes les bizarres nouvelles que l'on écrit de Paris m'ont obligé de faire cette fête, afin de ne leur laisser pas la créance que l'on les méprise, comme aussi pour les réchauffer un peu envers nous par toutes sortes de voies honnêtes et licites. Vous voulez bien que j'aie donné ordre à cette affaire.

121. "FANATICS" IN THE PROVINCES.—*Cominges to Louis, Sept. 29, 1664.*—Les fanatiques continuent leurs extravagances quoique les prisons en soient pleines et les soldats incessamment à leurs trousses.

122. MISADVENTURE OF THE LADY CASTLEMAINE.—*Cominges to Louis, Oct. 2, 1664.*—Il y a deux jours que Madame de Castlemaine, sortant le soir de chez Madame la Duchesse qui demeure présentement à St. James, accompagnée d'une seule demoiselle et d'un petit page fut rencontrée par trois gentilshommes (du moins le pouvait-on ainsi juger à leurs habillements) masqués, que lui firent la plus forte et rude réprimande que l'on puisse imaginer, jusques à lui dire que la maîtresse d'Edouard quatrième était morte sur un fumier, méprisée et abandonnée de tout le monde. Vous pouvez penser si le temps lui dura, car le parc est plus long que de chez Regnaud au Pavillon. Sitôt qu'elle fut dans sa chambre elle s'évanouit. Le Roi en fut averti, courut au secours et, étant informé de l'affaire, fit fermer toutes les portes et arrêter tout ce qui se trouva. Sept ou huit personnes qui s'y rencontrèrent, ayant été confrontées et point reconnues, ont publié l'aventure que l'on a bien voulu étouffer, mais je crois qu'il sera difficile.

123. THE DUKE OF YORK VISITING THE DOCKYARDS.—*Cominges to Lionne, Nov. 3, 1664.*—M. le Duc d'York passe tous les jours et une partie des nuits à visiter la rivière armer les vaisseaux et fournir les magasins. Toutes choses se disposent à un grand armement . . . M. le Duc et sa cabale agissent comme s'il était sur le point de s'embarquer. Samedi il fit sortir de Chatham le "St. James" monté, de quatre vingt pièces et le meilleur vaisseau de toute l'Angleterre. Déjà son tapissier meuble ses appartements et son maréchal des logis marque les cabanes pour les seigneurs qui se préparent à le suivre.

124. POWER OF ENGLISH WORDS.—*Cominges to Louis, Nov. 6, 1664.*—Sur ce raffinement un chacun cria : Very wel ! Very wel !—Le Comte de Gramont expliquera l'énergie et la force de cette phrase anglaise à Votre Majesté.

125. LAUNCHING OF A MAN OF WAR.—SPLENDOR OF THE ENGLISH NAVY.—*Cominges to the King, Nov. 6, 1664.*—Hier le

Roi d'Angleterre me fit l'honneur de me mener avec lui pour voir mettre à la mer un vaisseau de douze cents tonneaux, le plus beau et le plus magnifique que j'aie jamais vu. Cependant que les peintres travaillent à l'embellissement des dehors et des chambres, l'on le mâte, l'on y met les cordages et l'artillerie . . . Nous vîmes dans ce lieu là tous les vieux généraux et capitaines de Cromwell, qui sont fort affectionnés et pleins de confiance à cause de leurs dernières victoires contre les Hollandais. Le Roi me dit devant eux qu'ils avaient tous eu la peste, mais qu'ils étaient parfaitement guéris, et moins susceptibles de maladie que les autres. Je vous avoue, Sire, qu'il n'y a rien de plus beau à voir que toute cette marine, rien de plus grand ni de plus majestueux que ce grand nombre de vaisseaux faits et à faire, cette nombreuse quantité de canons, de mats, de cordages, de planches et autres machines nécessaires à cette sorte de guerre. Le Roi nous fit dans un de ses yachts un magnifique repas. y but la santé de V. M. et commanda à la compagnie de le seconder, qui ne s'épargna pas à faire son devoir. Je fis le remerciement et en Son nom, je bus celle du Roi d'Angleterre. L'une et l'autre fut célébrée par tant de coups de canon que, par son bruit, il fit changer le temps.

Durant cette réjouissance la mer grossit, qui ne fit guère moins de malades que le vin, et la Reine qui se trouva sur la rivière avec ses dames fut bien exempte du mal, mais non pas de la crainte. Tout le reste s'en ressentit et en donna des marques. Cette bourrasque finie, le beau temps revint, qui en donna suffisamment pour mettre le vaisseau à la mer et goûter le plaisir sans incommodité de la grêle ou de la pluie. La chose finie, la Reine prit les carrosses préparés pour le Roi qui, faisant son plaisir de voir les autres malades dans la tempête, ne se soucia guères de nous y commettre. Nous ne pumes pourtant arriver à la ville dans la berge ; il fallut prendre des carrosses et des chevaux à Greenwich pour nous rendre à Whitehall.

126. A MORNING VISIT TO THE CHATHAM DOCKYARDS.—*Cominges to Louis, Nov. 13, 1664.*—Lundi dernier, à cinq heures du matin, le Roi d'Angleterre m'envoya convier à l'accompagner jusques à Chatham, pour y voir six navires ou plutôt six machines de guerre les plus belles et les plus grandes que l'on voie sur les mers.

Le vaisseau que doit monter M. le Duc d'York, nommé "le Charles," est aussi beau par le dedans que les plus magnifiques cabinets et aussi fort par le dehors que les plus fortes citadelles. Il est monté de quatre vingt pièces de canon, dont il y en a . . . six pièces sur le château d'avant, dont il y a deux conleuvrines d'une prodigieuse longueur.

127. VOLUNTEERS ON THE FLEET.—*Cominges to Louis, Nov. 16, 1664.*—Cependant une partie des volontaires partira lundi avec la flotte pour s'accoutûmer. Les ducs de Monmouth, de Richmond, de Buckingham, de Norfolk, et plusieurs autres seigneurs sont de la partie.

128. INSECURITY OF THE POST.—*Cominges to Louis, Jan. 8, 1665.*—M. de Ruigny dira beaucoup de particularités à V. M. qu'il est dangereux d'écrire. L'on a ici le secret d'ouvrir les lettres plus subtilement qu'en lieu du monde. L'on croit même que cela a le bel air et que l'on ne saurait être grand homme d'Etat sans arrêter les paquets.

129. PROPHECIES.—*Cominges to Lionne, Jan. 19, 1665.*—[Some English prophets foretell of disasters], ce qui ne laisse pas de donner de la peine et de l'inquiétude aux anciens Anglais qui révérent la mémoire de Merlin et du Roi 'Artus.'

130. MADAME DE COMINGES STOPPED BY THE FROST.—*Cominges to Lionne, Jan. 19, 1665.*—Madame de Cominges est arrêtée par les glaces. Il y a quinze jours qu'elle est sans autres hardes que celles qu'elle avait réservées pour le voyage. Le Roi lui a fait l'honneur de la visiter et l'a régalée d'un assez beau poinçon de diamant. [Somewhat later Cominges writes :] Enfin il commence à dégeler, et j'espère que dans deux ou trois jours, ma femme, qui a gardé la chambre quinze jours faute d'habits, s'embarquera pour s'en retourner en France. (Jan. 29, 1665.)

131. ST. EVREMONT.—*Ruigny to Lionne, Jan. 22, 1665.*—St. Evremont se trouve en grande nécessité de santé et d'argent.

Le Roi d'Angleterre lui donna hier une pension de trois cents Jacobus. Il fait pitié.

132. A GIFT TO THE QUEEN-MOTHER.—UNPOPULARITY OF THE FRENCH.—*Cominges to Lionne, Feb. 16, 1665.*—Il faut finir par une nouvelle qui vous fera rire. Il y a deux jours que je présentai à la Reine-mère la calèche que le Roi lui a envoyée. Je crois que la moitié de la ville accourut pour la voir au passage, qui se disaient les uns aux autres que c'était le tribut que le Roi de France payait à l'Angleterre et que, pour couvrir en quelque façon ce devoir, j'avais obtenu du Roi d'Angleterre que je le présenterais à la Reine sa mère. Après cela, Monsieur, dites que je ne suis pas adroit et que la France ne m'est pas obligée de mettre si finement à couvert le malheur de sa destinée.

133. COMINGES'S ATTITUDE BEFORE DEATH.—*Bruchet to Lionne, March 30, 1665.*—Le mal de M. l'Ambassadeur augmentant de jour à autre, il ne veut plus songer qu'à mettre sa conscience en repos, sans plus penser aux affaires du monde. C'est pourquoi il m'a commandé pour la dernière fois, de vous mander les effets qu'a produits le mémoire qu'il a présenté au Roi d'Angleterre le 26 de ce mois. Ses ministres l'ont trouvé trop rude et trop pressant ; mais Son Exc. a cru ne devoir pas moins faire après tant de sujets de plaintes. . . .

M. l'Ambassadeur vous prie de faire ses derniers compliments au Roi et aux Reines et de témoigner à Leurs Majestés que le plus grand regret qu'il ait en mourant, c'est de ne rendre pas les derniers soupirs à leurs pieds. Il vous prie aussi, Monseigneur, d'empêcher que Madame la Comtesse de Cominges, outrée d'une si juste douleur, entreprenne de le venir trouver, puisque, avant son arrivée, ce sera une affaire vidée de façon ou d'autre. . . . Toute cette Cour fait paraître beaucoup de déplaisir de son mal et envoie exactement savoir de ses nouvelles.

134. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE "CÉLÈBRE AMBASSADE."—*April 4, 1665.*—Sadite Majesté désire que ledit Sieur duc de Verneuil et le Sieur Courtin partent sans délai, dans la toute semaine prochaine pour se rendre à Londres avec le plus de diligence qu'il leur sera

possible, sans s'assujétir à attendre tout l'attirail de leur équipage qui les pourra suivre à loisir. [They will do their best to prevent war. If war takes place and the English have the better of it, England will remain without a rival at sea ;] après quoi il serait très difficile aux autres Puissances de contester aux Anglais cet empire de la mer auquel ils ont de tout temps aspiré et dont aujourd'hui ils se montrent si avides qu'on peut dire que ce dessein et celui de s'emparer de tout le commerce du monde sont les deux véritables causes de tout le trouble et de toutes les querelles qu'ils suscitent présentement auxdits Etats. [Louis acknowledges that] les forces maritimes de sa couronne ne répondent pas présentement à sa véritable puissance.

135. COMINGES'S OBSERVATIONS ON HIS IMPENDING DEATH.—*To Lionne, April 7, 1665.*—L'on se plaint extrêmement de la sécheresse et de la manière dont j'ai fait mon mémoire au Roi et à son Conseil. Si je meurs, ma charge n'en sera guère plus pesante, et si je reviens je saurai bien soutenir la forme et la matière de mon écrit. Ce qui leur paraît de plus fâcheux, à mon avis, c'est qu'un homme qui rend l'esprit est toujours censé dire la vérité, et ses paroles emportent avec soi je ne sais quelle considération qui les fait estimer de tout le monde.

136. ROYAL ENGLISH YACHTS FOR VERNEUIL AND COURTIN.—*Bigorre to Lionne, April 14, 1665, from Calais.*—Il y a ici deux yachts qui sont fort beaux et fort dorés au dehors et au dedans. Les chambres en sont admirablement propres, avec des tapis de pied et des lits de velours.

137. DOVER TO LONDON.—TALK ON THE WAY.—*The Three Ambassadors Extraordinary to Louis, April 20, 1665.*—Beaucoup de gens demandaient à Douvres, à Cantorbéry, à Rochester, aux personnes de notre suite pourquoi nous allions à Londres, et sur ce qu'on leur répondait que c'était pour y traiter la paix entre l'Angleterre et la Hollande, ils disaient assez naturellement, que si nous ne venions que pour cela, nous n'avions qu'à nous en retourner.

138. CHARLES ON THE WAR.—*Verneuil, Courtin, and Cominges to*

Lionne, April 23, 1665.—[Charles says to Courtin:] Mr., ma flotte est hors de mes ports à cette heure : je ne l'y puis plus faire rentrer avec honneur ; et puis mon peuple est enragé contre les Hollandais.

139. FRENCH AND ENGLISH KINGSHIP.—*Courtin to Lionne, April, 1665.*—Il y a cette différence entre lui [*i.e.*, Charles II.] et le Roi notre maître que Sa Majesté peut faire marcher ses sujets comme il Lui plaît, mais il faut que le Roi d'Angleterre marche avec les siens.

140. UNMANAGEABLENESS OF THE DUTCH.—*The Three to Louis, May 11, 1665.*—[They try to incline the Dutch envoy Van Gogh to peace].—Ah ! Monsieur, répondit-il, vous me demandez une grande affaire. Ce que je puis vous assurer, est que nos peuples ne sont pas moins difficiles à gouverner que les Anglais et qu'ils n'approuveraient jamais que nous allassions plus avant. . . . Puisque on nous attaque injustement, j'ai été homme d'armes (ce sont les propres termes dont il s'est servi), je saurai bien périr comme les autres . . . Nous le laissons revenir de ce mouvement qui avait été causé par un beau zèle, et peut-être parce qu'il avait une grande épée à son côté.

141. DRINKING.—*Courtin to Lionne, May 24, 1665.*—Excusez mon style ; j'ai écrit toute la nuit et je viens de boire un peu plus que de raison.

142. THE DÉBUTS OF LIONNE'S SON IN ENGLISH SOCIETY.—*Courtin to Lionne, May 24, 1665.*—Mr. votre fils commence comme les honnêtes gens font : il est un peu honteux ; mais nous lui avons donné du courage et Mr. d'Irval (?) l'a si bien servi qu'enfin il a fait sa déclaration, qui a été fort bien reçue par une des plus jolies filles d'Angleterre. C'est Mademoiselle 'Genins,' qui est auprès de Madame la Duchesse d'York : elle est petite, mais d'une fort jolie taille : elle a le teint admirable, les cheveux comme vous avez vu autrefois ceux de Madame de Longueville ; les yeux vifs et brillants et la peau la plus fine et la plus blanche que j'aie jamais vue. Madame la Duchesse, qui est assez sévère aux autres, trouve qu'ils sont si bien assortis qu'elle est la première à

less favoriser : la Reine-mère, le Roi, toute la Cour est dans les mêmes sentiments. On en rit, mais je vous assure que l'affaire va bien et qu'elle ne vous doit donner aucune inquiétude, car vous pouvez bien croire que je mettrais comme on dit les 'hola'; si je voyais que notre cavalier allât trop avant. Mais sa galanterie est justement au point où il faut qu'elle soit pour le rendre honnête homme et je vous en ferai savoir le progrès.

143. CHARLES'S FRENCH AND THE AMBASSADORS' LATIN.—*The Three to Louis, May 24, 1665.*—Depuis que je suis dans mon Royaume [Charles says] j'ai quasi oublié la langue française, et, dans la vérité, la peine que j'ai à trouver les paroles me fait perdre mes pensées. C'est pourquoi j'ai besoin d'être soulagé et d'avoir du temps pour délibérer sur les affaires qui m'ont été proposées en cette langue. . . . Comme il se vit pressé, il ajouta que ses commissaires n'entendraient pas le français. Je [*i.e.*, Courtin] lui représentai qu'il y avait beaucoup de personnes dans son Conseil qui le parlaient aussi bien que nous et qu'en tous cas nous traiterions en latin, si ces Messieurs en voulaient prendre le parti.

Non, non, dit-il, je vous assure qu'ils ne traiteront jamais que par écrit.

C'est, Sire, lui répliquai-je, ce que je suis bien fâché que nous ne puissions pas faire.

Comme nous en étions là, on ouvrit la porte et la Reine sa mère, qui se retirait, vint à passer, et nous dit : Dieu vous bénisse, comme témoignant du désir qu'elle avait que nous puissions prendre quelque bonne résolution. Le Comte de St. Alban parut dans l'ouverture de la porte et le Roi l'appella à lui, disant : Approchez-vous, voici un petit homme dont je ne saurais venir à bout.

144. THE LOVES OF YOUNG LIONNE.—*Courtin to Lionne, May 28, 1665.*—Je me suis opposé au dessein que M. votre fils avait d'aller voir la flotte avec Madame la Duchesse d'York. . . . Il est d'un tempérament si vif que je n'ai pas cru qu'il fût à propos de le laisser sur sa foi pendant cinq ou six jours depuis le matin jusques au soir auprès d'une jeune fille avec laquelle il serait peut-être embarqué plus avant que je n'eusse voulu.

Je lui donnai hier le plan d'une dépêche pour M. d'Estrades, non pas à dessein qu'elle nous servît à tous trois . . . mais pour l'essayer.

. . . Je lui dis toutes les vérités qu'il est nécessaire qu'il sache, et je ne me contente pas de traiter avec lui tous les chapitres qui me paraissent les plus importants ; je prie aussi M. de Cominges de m'aider. Nous avons entre nous à combattre quelquefois la timidité, quelquefois la présomption, fort souvent la paresse, mais principalement la vanité qui se nourrit par tous les honneurs qu'on lui rend ; ce qui me fait juger qu'il est nécessaire que vous le mettiez dans la robe, où il se trouvera tous les jours parmi des gens qui, n'ayant point de vues pour la Cour, vivront plus familièrement avec lui, et le détromperont de ce que la considération qu'on a pour vous lui peut faire entrer dans l'esprit.

145. THE LOWER CLASSES IN ENGLAND AND THEIR PASSION FOR POLITICS.—*The Three to Lionne, June 1, 1665.*—La conclusion de ce discours [Lauderdale's speech against France at the Castlemaine's] est dans la bouche de tous les Anglais, et il ne faut qu'aller à la Bourse pour l'entendre répéter tous les matins. Car dans ce pays ici, tout le monde se croit en droit de parler des affaires d'Etat, et les bateliers mêmes veulent que les mylords les en entretiennent quand ils les conduisent au Parlement.

146. HOLLES' STREET DIFFICULTIES IN PARIS.—APOLOGIES OFFERED TO HIM.—*Lionne to the Three, June 3, 1665.*—[Holles's coach had been stopped in the street and a quarrel between coachmen had ensued.] Le Marquis de Besnac, qui doit être quelque jeune homme puisqu'il n'a point encore l'honneur d'être connu de S. M., lui dit [*i.e.* to Holles] quelque parole facheuse comme serait à dire qu'il le trouvait bien emporté pour un vieillard. . . .

Le Roi n'a pas laissé . . . de faire mettre le Marquis de Besnac à la Bastille et tous ses gens au Fort l'Evêque, qui est tout ce qui s'est pu faire.

147. RIGOUR OF THE ENGLISH CLIMATE.—*Courtin to Lionne, June 4, 1665.*—Il est nécessaire que le Roi jette les yeux sur quelqu'un qui ait les épaules larges pour remplir l'ambassade d'Angleterre, car

M. de Verneuil est en fort mauvais état ; M. de Cominges a un rhume éternel qui l'accompagnera jusques au tombeau ou jusques en France, et moi, qui ai naturellement la poitrine fort délicate je perds la voix depuis quatre ou cinq jours, et j'ai un si grand feu dans l'estomac, avec des douleurs de côté que la peur commence à me prendre, et si cela continue je serai bientôt hors d'état de faire aucune fonction.

148. YOUNG LIONNE'S OPINION OF YOUTH AND AGE.—*Courtin to Lionne, June 8, 1665.*—Mr. votre fils est un infidèle ; le Roi d'Angleterre l'a découvert, et la vérité est, comme je vous l'ai mandé, qu'il s'est piqué d'honneur et qu'il n'a pas voulu que nous le puissions soupçonner d'être capable d'aller trop loin. Ainsi, à cet égard, il n'y a rien à craindre. Ce qui est de fâcheux seulement, c'est qu'il ne saurait aimer, à ce qu'il dit, que de jeunes filles, et cependant, il faut que les gens de son âge soient dressés par des vieilles qui leur fassent perdre la honte qui les rend muets et les empêche de rien entreprendre.

149. INCONVENIENCY OF TOO STRICT INSTRUCTIONS.—*Courtin to Lionne, June 8, 1665.*—Je demeure d'accord que, pour ce qui regarde le fond d'un traité, il faut qu'un Ambassadeur se règle, sur les ordres du maître ; mais pour la forme et pour tous les expédients, il en doit être le maître, parce qu'un homme qui est sur les lieux voit des choses qu'on ne peut envisager de loin. [If he were not comparatively young, he would follow his own bent.] Je prendrais des partis, sans vous en rien faire savoir qu'après coup [As things stand, he will care less about business.] Vous me permettrez, dès que je ne tousserai plus, de vivre comme les ministres d'Angleterre, et, dès ce matin j'ai nommé au Roi la personne qui m'a touché le cœur, et il a commencé à me rendre de bons offices auprès d'elle.

150. YOUNG LIONNE IMPROVED BY LOVE.—*Cominges to Lionne, June, 1665.*—Je vous avoue que je n'ai pu me résoudre à lui retrancher un divertissement qui peut contribuer à le rendre honnête homme, d'autant plus qu'il ne pouvait faire un plus beau ni meilleur choix que sa petite maîtresse. Depuis son intrigue je le trouve plus bardi dans la conversation, plus soigneux de sa personne et moins sauvage avec le monde, et j'espère que ce voyage ne

lui aura pas nui et que vous trouverez quelque changement dans sa manière de vivre qui ne vous déplaira pas. Il est vrai que vous êtes bien difficile et que vous voudriez trouver l'entière perfection dans un âge où la raison à peine se laisse reconnaître.

151. VERNEUIL FEELS DEPRESSED AND HIS SERVANTS TOO.—*Courtin to Lionne, June 11, 1665.*—Au lieu de consoler leur maître qui commence fort à s'ennuyer, ils paraissent tous autour de lui comme des gens qu'on va mener au supplice, et dès que j'arrive ils me demandent quand on partira.

152. THE PLAGUE.—*Courtin to Lionne, June 18, 1665.*—La peste nous assiège de tous côtés, et, à moins qu'il n'arrive quelque chose de fâcheux, la Cour quittera Londres aussitôt que la Reine-mère sera partie. M. de Verneuil se dispose à ne mener que fort peu de gens avec lui et à renvoyer le reste en France. Je vous demande conseil pour savoir comment j'en dois user. J'ai 40 personnes chez moi ; je n'oserais en laisser aucune dans Londres à cause de la maladie qui s'augmente.

153. JEAN DE WITT.—*Courtin to Lionne, June 22, 1665.*—M. de Witt est un homme assez ferme pour vouloir encore hasarder un combat. Il sera peut-être déchiré par le peuple.

154. REJOICINGS FOR THE VICTORY OVER THE DUTCH.—*Bigorre to Lionne, June 18, 1665.*—A l'heure où je vous écris Monseigneur, qui est environ onze heures du soir, j'entends de tous côtés des cris du peuple qui est en grande multitude dans les rues autour des feux de joie. En revenant de chez Messieurs de Cominges et Courtin pour leur faire signer les dépêches, j'en ai vu beaucoup qu'on préparait. Aux portes des personnes riches, il y avait à un seul feu une charretée de bois, et ceux qui n'en ont pas brûlent leurs vieilles chaises et leurs vieux coffres. . . . On a mis quelque étendard qu'on a pris sur les Hollandais tout au haut de la Tour de Londres. Les cloches de Westminster ont sonné pour marque de réjouissance.

155. THE REJOICINGS FOLLOWED BY A RIOT.—*The Three to Lionne, June 22, 1665.*—Nous avons bien prévu qu'en nous conduisant comme des médiateurs et ne faisant point de feux de joie,

nous nous exposerions à déplaire au peuple de Londres. Nous en avons reçu une insulte, nous Cominges et Courtin, parce que nos maisons sont au milieu de la ville. . . . Il est vrai que cela est arrivé à une heure après minuit, c'est-à-dire après que les Anglais avaient bien bu ; mais ils ne laissèrent pas le jour même et le lendemain de dire beaucoup d'injures à tous les Français qui passaient dans les rues. . . . Cela vient de l'aversion naturelle qu'ils ont contre la nation.

156. RIOT AGAINST THE FRENCH AMBASSADORS.—*Courtin to Lionne, June 22, 1665.*—Mon histoire ne sera pas longue ; j'en ai été quitte pour une douzaine de vitres cassées dans la chambre de M. votre fils, et M. de Cominges a plus de sujet de se plaindre que moi. Si nous n'eussions été sages, vous eussiez oui parler d'une grillade d'Ambassadeurs, car toutes les rues étaient pleines de charbon fort allumé.

157. COMINGES'S ACCOUNT OF THE RIOT.—*To Lionne, June 22, 1665.*—Vous saurez donc, Monsieur, pour l'oublier un moment après, que, pour ne rien faire d'indécent ni de contraire à la qualité de médiateur, j'ordonnai à mes gens de ne point faire de feu devant ma porte, mais bien de donner du bois pour augmenter celui des voisins en cas qu'ils en demandassent. Soit que d'abord ils n'y prissent pas garde, ou que les fumées du vin ne leur eussent pas encore monté à la tête, l'on me laissa en repos jusques à minuit. Mais peu après il sembla bon à une multitude de canailles, qui croyait sans doute témoigner son zèle pour la patrie et son aversion pour les Français, d'attaquer ma maison avec leurs sobriquets ordinaires, et ensuite avec une grêle de cailloux qui me fit abandonner ma chambre pour éviter d'être blessé dans une si belle occasion. Mes gens, braves comme des lions enchainés, s'émurent aux insolences et coururent aux armes, chacun selon sa profession, c'est-à-dire que les broches faisaient l'avant-garde et les pistolets et mousquetons le corps de la bataille. Les choses ainsi ordonnées, je crus qu'il était à propos de calmer cette fougue militaire. Ainsi, après une harangue de remerciements, je fis retirer mes troupes . . . Les ennemis profitant de ma prudence, qu'ils appelaient faiblesse, marquèrent toutes les avenues de ma maison d'un

nombre infini de croix blanches, avec une inscription qui disait : 'Dieu veuille avoir pitié et miséricorde de cette pauvre maison !' comme si véritablement la peste en eût déjà ravagé les habitants. Chacun se retira avec des cris et des huées.

158. USELESSNESS OF TALK AND COMPLIMENTS.—*Courtin to Lionne, June 29, 1665.*—Tant que je verrai ici que M. van Gogh et que nous ne serons chargés que de certains lieux communs pour persuader par de belles paroles le Roi d'Angleterre, à qui nous avons déjà reçu ordre de faire trois ou quatre fois le même compliment, je croirai que vous riez sous cape quand, par malheur pour vous, la bienséance vous oblige à nous écrire. Et vous me permettrez de vous rendre la justice que je vous dois : vous êtes trop éclairé pour ne pas savoir, ainsi que moi, que le Roi d'Angleterre, quand il serait capable de se laisser toucher par toutes les belles choses que vous avez si délicatement touchées dans notre instruction et dans deux ou trois autres dépêches, n'ayant qu'une autorité dépendante des mouvements de son Parlement ou de son peuple, n'est pas en état de suivre les sentiments de son cœur. Il faut donc examiner si les témoignages de tendresse de la part de S. M., ses prières, et toutes les instances que nous faisons sur ce sujet sont capables de faire quelque impression sur le Parlement d'Angleterre et sur le peuple de Londres ; et c'est ce que vous ne croirez pas aisément.

159. VERNEUIL WANTS TO GO.—*Courtin to Lionne, July 2, 1655.* [Courtin has worked so hard to settle the claims of the merchants, that he feels very unwell.] J'en serai pulmonique au premier jour. Mais je me suis mis dans la tête de ne pas mourir à Londres, et je ne veux pas faire comme le pauvre M. de Verneuil dont l'esprit est plus abattu que le corps. Nous faisons tout ce qui nous est possible, M. de Cominges et moi, pour lui faire prendre courage, et nous avons raison, car jamais nous ne serons avec un homme plus commode, mais notre éloquence est à bout, et si vous ne nous envoyez vite ment quelqu'un de ces grands seigneurs qui se promènent tous les jours, huit ou neuf heures durant, dans la cour du vieil château de St. Germain, on montrera un jour aux Français, le tombeau de M. de Verneuil dans l'abbaye de Westminster.

160. PORTUGUESE ECCLESIASTICS OF THE QUEEN.—*Bigorre to*

Lionne, July 2, 1665.—La Reine d'Angleterre n'a quasi point de Portugais auprès d'elle ; mais, en revanche, elle a, pour le service de sa chapelle, des religieux de son pays et plusieurs ecclésiastiques dont il n'y a pas un qui n'ait mené ses père, mère, frères, neveux, etc. S. M. a envoyé tout ce train à Salisbury à cause de la peste. Il y en avait huit carrosses pleins.

161. RETURN OF YOUNG LIONNE.—*The Three to Lionne, July 2, 1665.*—Il a fort bien réussi dans cette Cour ; nous pouvons vous assurer qu'on sera fort fâché de le perdre et qu'il y était estimé du Roi, des Reines et fort aimé de la plus jolie fille qui soit en Angleterre.

162. SLOW PROGRESS OF THE PLAGUE.—*Bigorre to Lionne, July 6, 1665.*—La peste n'est pas en ce lieu si contagieuse qu'aux pays chauds, puisque, dans les rues où il y a quatre ou cinq maisons fermées, on parle avec les pestiférés qui ouvrent leurs fenêtres et on se promène dans lesdites rues comme s'il n'y avait aucun mal. Jusques à cette heure on croit que l'air n'est pas gâté et il n'y a eu aucune personne de médiocre condition seulement qui ait été attaquée.

163. A DINNER AT THE SPANISH EMBASSY.—*Bigorre to Lionne, July 6, 1665.*—Le Comte de Molina . . . traite Messeigneurs les Ambassadeurs mercredi. Il fait fort bonne chère à la mode d'Espagne, commençant par des ollas, le second est le fruit, et le troisième le rôti. Il a un sommelier qui fait du blanc-manger liquide qu'on estime fort et qu'on boit comme de la limonade.

164. COURTIN'S PLEADING FOR YOUNG LIONNE.—*July 9, 1665.*—Ne vous rebutez pas pour les premières fautes de la jeunesse. Si je passe l'hiver à Paris, je prétends vous dégeler l'un et l'autre et vous accoutumer si bien ensemble que vous prendrez autant de plaisir à le former qu'il en prendra à être instruit.

165. AFTER A SUPPER AT THE SPANISH EMBASSY.—*Bigorre to Lionne, July 9, 1665.*—Lundi dernier il [*i.e.*, Molina] donna à souper à Madame de Castlemaine et à plusieurs autres Anglais et Anglaises. Il y eut grand régal, mais ses gens ayant fait boire les cochers et les

laquais sans mesure, ils se trouvèrent tous soûls quand il fut question de partir et, comme leurs maîtres et maîtresses s'en aperçurent et qu'ils ne voulurent pas se laisser mener par des hommes ivres, ils empruntèrent à M. l'Ambassadeur d'Espagne ses cochers et ses postillons. Mais il restait encore à quelques uns des autres assez de connaissance pour découvrir le tort qu'ils croyaient qu'on leur faisait ; si bien que s'étant mis en état de l'empêcher, ils se gourmèrent avec les domestiques de M. de Molina, et ce fut le plus grand et le plus plaisant désordre du monde.

166. THE MANY FRIENDS OF THE SPANISH AMBASSADOR.—*Courtin to Lionne, July 9, 1665.*—C'est qu'il a de quoi les culturer et qu'il travaille sur les mémoires que Philippe de Comines nous a laissés.

167. FRENCH INCENSE. ITS SUCCESS WITH MISS STUART.—*Courtin to Lionne, July 9, 1665.*—Pour nous autres, que les Anglais ne saluent pas dans les rues et qui n'avons plus personne en qui nous puissions prendre confiance, nous sommes obligés de donner de l'encens au lieu d'argent. Cette monnaie a été de mise jusques à cette heure auprès de Mlle. Stewart, chez qui le Roi d'Angleterre me mena hier à onze heures du soir, et je vous peux assurer que je suis mieux avec elle que le comte de Molina n'est avec Madame de Castlemaine. C'est le soleil levant et, pour dire le vrai aussi, elle est incomparablement plus belle que l'autre.

168. THE PLAGUE.—REMOVING TO KINGSTON.—*Bigorre to Lionne, July 12, 1665.*—S. A. de Verneuil étant partie hier au matin de Londres pour se rendre en ce lieu, j'ai eu l'honneur de l'y accompagner et je me donne celui de vous avertir, Monseigneur, de notre arrivée à 'Kinstawn.' Messieurs de Cominges et Courtin ne viendront ici que demain, encore ne sais-je si ce dernier pourra si tôt quitter un lieu où la peste l'environne. Car un jeune fou chez qui le maréchal des logis du Roi d'Angleterre lui avait marqué son logement a effacé lui même la craie, et se vante de ne souffrir personne dans sa maison. On a fait la même réception à M. l'Ambassadeur d'Espagne. On travaille à faire obéir ces esprits mal faits : mais apparemment on n'en viendra pas à bout sans peine. Vous voyez par là, Monsieur, qu'on aurait tort d'appeler les Rois

d'Angleterre *nimum reges*. Il y a eu déjà une maison pestiférée en ce lieu ; mais S. M. B. a ordonné qu'on enlevât tout ce qui se trouvera dedans et qu'on parfumât le logis avec un soin extrême.

[Bigorre writes at the same time to Courtin :] Si vous jugez à propos, Monseigneur, d'aller dire un mot à M. le Grand Chambellan, je crois que vous ne vous rendrez pas seulement un bon service, mais à tous les Ambassadeurs en général, car on fait la même difficulté à celui d'Espagne ; et si la conduite de ce jeune éventé n'est punie, il nous faudra partout où nous irons en sortant d'ici, livrer un combat pour avoir un logement. Pour moi, Monseigneur, en qualité de Gascon, cela ne met guère en peine, et je puis assurer V. E. que je verserai toujours jusqu'à la dernière goutte de mon encre pour lui témoigner que je suis [etc.].

[Courtin forwards the above to Lionne, adding :] Vous verrez par la lettre de M. Bigorre, que je viens de recevoir, en quelle perplexité est Mon Excellence. Me voila réduit à demeurer encore pour quelques jours parmi les pestiférés. Car après qu'on aura trouvé 'milord chamberlan' qui est à la campagne, son crédit ne s'étendra pas jusques à me faire loger chez un Anglais s'il ne le trouve bon. Je ne me consolerais point d'être parmi des gens fort incivils et dans une belle négociation en apparence, dans laquelle néanmoins nous passons quatre ordinaires sans que vous pensiez que nous soyons au monde, si je n'avais trouvé heureusement les *Amadis* qu'un bon père jésuite qui me sert d'aumonier lit avec autant de plaisir que moi, après avoir couru chez tous les libraires de Londres pour les acheter. . . .

Je vous écris d'un désert ; on peut appeler ainsi le lieu où nous sommes, c'est-à-dire le quartier, où la Cour loge en cette ville, qui n'est pas moins grand que le faubourg St. Germain. Il en est sorti, depuis quatre jours, trente mille personnes, et, dès hier, nous rencontrames, M. de Cominges et moi, des gens avec des baguettes blanches, c'est-à-dire des pestiférés, qui se promenaient dans les rues . . . Nous sommes restés ici, M. de Cominges et moi, pour régler nos affaires, mettre nos hardes en sureté, en renvoyer une partie en France, aussi bien que quelques uns de nos domestiques, et nous nous sommes retranchés tous deux à n'avoir que chacun vingt trois personnes (July 13, 1665).

169. LADY CASTLEMAINE OUT OF TEMPER.—*Courtin to Lionne, Kingston, July 16, 1665.*—[The Lady] n'a pas voulu coucher à Hampton Court, disant que son appartement n'est pas encore prêt. Cependent S. M. B. Soupa hier avec Mlle. Stewart chez milord Arlington qui avait sa maîtresse de la partie. C'est une Madame Scrope, première femme de chambre de la Reine, qui est d'une taille à ne pas se contenter d'un Secrétaire d'Etat : car, Monsieur, afin que vous le sachiez, on ne contente pas les dames avec de belles dépêches comme celles que vous faites tous les jours. . . . Mais pour revenir à ce que je vous disais, Madame de Castlemaine hasarde fort, et si sa colère dure, elle pourra bien perdre la plus belle rose de son chapeau. On peut se servir de cette comparaison dans un pays où toutes les femmes en portent.

170. SPANISH CHOCOLATE.—*Courtin to Lionne, Kingston, July 16, 1665.*—Il [*i.e.*, Molina] fait la plus extraordinaire grimace que j'aie jamais vue. En récompense il a le meilleur chocolat du monde, et si je n'appréhendais point de me brouiller avec Madame de Lionne, je vous en enverrais. Mais après cela, vous auriez un si grande mépris pour celui dont elle vous a rapporté le secret de Madrid que vous n'en prendriez de votre vie.

171. FRESH DIFFICULTIES IN FINDING ACCOMMODATION.—*The Three to Lionne, July 26, 1665.*—Nous avons envoyé chacun un de nos domestiques avec les maréchaux des logis du Roi, qui nous ont rapporté que ces officiers n'ont osé mettre la croix, et que les propriétaires avaient dit en leur présence qu'ils ne quitteraient pas leurs chambres pour qui que ce fût. On tient impunément ce langage en ce pays-ci.

172. LITTLE JENNINGS AND YOUNG LIONNE.—*Courtin to Lionne, July 27, 1665.*—Jeudi soir le Roi d'Angleterre tourmenta fort en ma présence 'mistris Genins' sur le sujet de M. votre fils ; la petite fille en rougit et jamais je ne l'ai vue si belle. S. M. me dit que M. Porter avait été prié à Calais par M. votre fils de lui faire savoir quelle mine elle aurait faite le jour de son départ et en même temps Sadite Majesté m'assura que jamais il n'avait vu un homme si désolé ni si triste que le galant lui parut sur le yacht de

la Reine mère. Je vous assure qu'il avait raison, car la demoiselle l'aimait bien, et si celle qui vous réduisit à prendre cette eau qui sent la thérébentine eût été aussi belle, votre estomac aurait eu bien de la peine à se rétablir. J'ai de quoi lui redonner une nouvelle vigueur, et je n'attends que le retour de Persod pour vous envoyer des tablettes de chocolat dont Monsieur l'Ambassadeur d'Espagne m'a fait présent.

173. SPANISH RECIPE FOR CHOCOLATE.—*Bigorre to Lionne, July 30, 1664.*—Après que le paquet où est le chocolat que M. Courtin vous envoie a été cacheté, il m'a ordonné de vous faire savoir comment M. l'Ambassadeur d'Espagne le prépare ; et il m'a dicté les trois lignes suivantes sans que j'y aie rien ajouté ni diminué :—“ *Il faut faire bouillir l'eau, et après cela mêler le chocolat et le sucre, et ne point le remettre sur le feu.*”

174. THE PLAGUE. AN ORDER READ TO THE TROOPS.—*Courtin to Lionne, Aug. 6, 1665.*—Ce matin, la peste a paru à un soldat des gardes qui était dans le château d'Hampton Court, et on a été contraint de faire un ban à la tête des compagnies, portant commandement à tout soldat malade de la peste de le déclarer, à peine d'être passé par les armes. Ce sont de grands agréments pour notre négociation, qui finira peut-être bientôt malgré nous, car si un de nos valets est attaqué de ce mal, il faudra que nous prenions la campagne, et je ne sais pas, si cela arrivait, si nous trouverions où nous mettre à couvert en ce pays.

175. A CORPSE ON THE ROAD.—*The Three to Lionne, Aug. 9, 1665.*—Tous les villages des environs d'Hampton Court sont infectés et je trouvais hier, moi, Duc de Verneuil, en me promenant le long du grand chemin, le corps d'un homme qui venait de mourir de la peste. Les pluies et les chaleurs qu'il fait contribueront fort à augmenter ce mal.

176. THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH.—*Courtin to Lionne, Aug. 15, 1665.*—Les évêques (dont il n'y en a pas un qui soit de naissance) ne sont en aucune considération ; aussi, à dire la vérité il est assez extraordinaire de voir un Evêque et des chanoines assis dans les chaires du chœur avec leurs femmes et leurs enfants auprès d'eux.

Cela donna lieu à un Ecossais d'écrire il y a quelque temps : "Vidi Episcopum et Episcopam, Episcopulos et Episcopulas." Le Roi même qui les a rétablis dans ces dignités me disait avant-hier qu'il ne trouvait pas cela bien, et en effet cela est cause qu'ils tombent dans le mépris.

177. FROM KINGSTON TO SALISBURY.—*Courtin to Lionne, Aug. 15, 1665.*—J'ai été surpris de voir en trente lieues de fort beau pays qu'il y a fort peu de villages ; que dans un temps de moisson il y a fort peu de gens qui travaillent à la campagne, qu'on ne rencontre presque personne sur les chemins. Nous avons passé dans trois villes, dont il y a deux qu'on nomme entre les plus considérables d'Angleterre, où même il y a des évêchés ; il s'en faut beaucoup qu'elles ne soient aussi grandes, aussi peuplées et aussi bien bâties que celle de St. Denis. Toutes les autres de ce royaume à la réserve de celles de Londres, d'York et de Bristol, ne valent pas micux. Le peuple y est assez commodément parce qu'il ne paye rien quand l'Etat n'a point de guerre à soutenir et parce qu'il se fait en ce pays de grandes nourritures. Mais les habitants de la campagne et des villes qui ne sont pas maritimes n'ont point d'argent ; ils sont même en fort petit nombre, ce qui arrive de ce que les colonies qui sont dans les Indes occidentales, l'établissement de beaucoup de familles dans l'Irlande et le service des vaisseaux consomment beaucoup de gens.

178. SALISBURY CATHEDRAL.—*Bigorre to Lionne, Aug. 15, 1665.*—Il y a en ce lieu une fort belle église qui est entre les mains des Protestants. Elle a autant de piliers qu'il y a d'heures à l'an, autant de fenêtres que de jours, et autant de portes que de mois.

179. SHUTTING UP OF HOUSES.—*Courtin to Lionne, Aug. 19, 1665.*—On a découvert à midi qu'un des palefreniers du Roi a la peste et on a donné ordre de l'enfermer, aussi bien que tous les autres qui logent dans la même maison. C'est un bon moyen pour les faire tous mourir.

180. SHUTTING UP OF THE SERVANTS OF THE SPANISH AMBASSADOR.—*The Three to Louis, Aug. 21, 1665.*—Les plupart des

domestiques de l'Ambassadeur d'Espagne qui, par bonheur pour lui ne logeaient pas dans sa maison, furent hier enfermés.

181. THE PLAGUE AT SALISBURY.—VERNEUIL GOES HUNTING.—*Bigorre to Lionne, Aug. 21, 1665.*—Quelques gardes qu'on ait mises aux portes de cette ville, un homme ayant la peste n'a pas laissé d'y entrer. Il a, quasi durant deux jours, fréquenté toute sorte de personnes et enfin avant hier au soir, il tomba raide mort au milieu de la rue, à deux cents pas de la maison du Roi d'Angleterre. On a brûlé une tente sous laquelle il s'était reposé et on a fermé la maison où il avait couché et dans laquelle neuf domestiques de l'Ambassadeur d'Espagne, ses chevaux et ses carrosses ont été depuis enfermés. . . . Monsieur le Duc de Verneuil se divertit à la chasse ; il a déjà une meute à lui avec laquelle il prend des daims et si quelque danger nous menace Dieu veut pour le moins que nous ne le craignons pas.

182. COURTIN WOULD LIKE TO GO.—*To Lionne, Aug. 21, 1665.*—Car à vous dire la vérité ce me serait une chose fort douloureuse de servir de fascine à votre politique dans un pays où tout le monde tremble et où nous voyons mourir tous les jours des gens devant nos yeux. M. de Verneuil approche de son terme ; M. de Cominges n'est debout que quatre heures pendant la journée, et ne vit que de poisson. Pour moi, qui n'ai pas encore trente huit ans, il me semble que je hasarde ici plus que pas un de la troupe et je voudrais bien me voir auprès de vous dans la nouvelle maison de M. le Commandeur de Souvré où je mangerais plus volontiers de ses potages que je ne prendrai ici des préservatifs que Madame de Sablé m'a envoyés.

183. A DREAM OF MISS STEWART.—*Courtin to Lionne, Aug. 23, 1665.*—Pour vous entretenir moins sérieusement, il est bon que vous sachiez que Mlle. Stewart songea avant-hier, la nuit, qu'elle était couchée avec les trois ambassadeurs de France. Il est vrai que, comme elle contait la chose au Roi d'Angleterre, il m'appela en tiers et cela fut cause qu'elle dit en rougissant qu'elle était du côté de M. de Verneuil.

184. MISS JENNINGS AND MISS BOYNTON.—*Courtin to Lionne,*

Aug. 23, 1665.—Il y en a deux qui sont fort jolies ; j'en prends à témoin M. votre fils qui vous dira ce que c'est que 'Mistris Bointon.' Il fit semblant d'en être amoureux pour faire dépit à 'Mistris Genins.' Il est vrai que 'Mistris Genins' avait grand tort ; elle ne voulait qu'il lui baisât les mains ; et à la fin elle comprit qu'il valait mieux abandonner ses mains que de perdre un galant, et l'accomodement fut bientôt fait.

185. NEWS OF THE PLAGUE.—*Courtin to Lionne, Aug. 30, 1665.*—Il est encore mort ce matin un homme en pleine rue. C'est une méchante habitude qui commence à prendre ici.

186. NEWS OF THE PLAGUE.—*The Three to Lionne, Sept. 20, 1665.*—Il est mort pendant la semaine passée 8,250 personnes dans Londres. On y allume des feux dans toutes les rues pour chasser, s'il est possible, le mauvais air.

187. IMPENDING RETURN OF THE AMBASSADORS.—*Courtin to Lionne, Oct. 13, 1665.*—Nous attendrons avec impatience de vos nouvelles pour savoir ce que nous deviendrons. Toute la grâce que je vous demande c'est que si vous voulez livrer quelqu'un aux dogues de ce pays, vous fassiez cet honneur-là à M. Dumas et que vous considériez un peu qu'un cadet d'une pauvre famille, chargé de quatre enfants a besoin de se conserver pour eux.

188. ARGUING WITH THE DUKE OF YORK.—*The Three to Louis, Oct. 13, 1665.*—Il nous répondit qu'il nous verrait toujours fort volontiers, mais que nous ne le ferions point changer de sentiments ; qu'il était Anglais et par conséquent fort opiniâtre—Mais, Monsieur, lui répartîmes nous, vous êtes Français d'un côté. Il est juste que vous vous partagiez un peu.

Messieurs, reprit-il, il est vrai. Mais les Anglais sont opiniâtres quand ils ont raison et, quand ils ne l'ont pas, les Français le sont avec raison. Ainsi il n'y a rien à gagner avec moi.

Et sur cela, il sortit de sa chambre et s'en alla aux prières.

189. THE SPEECH FROM THE THRONE TRANSLATED INTO FRENCH.—*The Three to Lionne, Nov. 1, 1665.*—Nous vous envoyons une traduction des harangues du Roi de la Grande Bretagne et de son

Chancelier. L'auteur nous assure qu'elle est fort fidèle ; il s'excuse seulement sur ce qu'il a suivi le tour de la phrase Anglaise et sur ce qu'il prétend que M. le Chancelier est obscur dans ses expressions. Nous nous en rapportons à ce qu'il en dit, ne sachant pas cette langue ; et tout ce que nous pouvons faire, c'est de vous répondre qu'il a eu bonne intention et qu'il s'est attaché à interpréter véritablement les endroits les plus importants.

190. THE SAARDAM SHIPBUILDERS.—*The Three to Louis, Nov. 1, 1665.*—[Van Gogh said to Courtin] que, dans une autre conjoncture, Messieurs les Etats seraient fâchés que la puissance de V. M. s'augmentât sur la mer, mais qu'ils le souhaitent à cette heure ; que vous aviez assez de matelots, mais que vous manquiez de navires, et qu'en mettant la main à la bourse et donnant six semaines d'avance aux entrepreneurs du village de 'Serdam,' ils vous bâtiraient trente vaisseaux qui seraient prêts d'être mis à la mer au printemps.

191. SUFFERINGS OF THE IRISH.—*The Three to Louis, Nov. 1, 1665.*—Le Parlement a résolu, après une délibération qui a duré deux jours, de défendre de transporter les bestiaux d'Irlande dans ce royaume : c'est encore un nouveau sujet de ruine pour les Irlandais qui n'avaient plus que ce seul commerce.

192. ANIMOSITY AGAINST THE FRENCH.—*The Three to Louis, Nov. 1, 1665.*—La haine des Anglais en général est à présent si grande contre la France, que le Parlement approuverait tous les traités qu'il croirait être utiles pour ruiner vos desseins. C'est pourquoi V. M. a plus de raison que jamais de veiller incessamment sur ce qui se passera dans les pays étrangers où, à l'avenir, tout conspirera contre Sa grandeur, et où les mesures qu'Elle aura prises seront aisées à rompre.

193. WANT OF BETTER INFORMATION.—*The Three to Louis, Nov. 1, 1665.*—V. M. nous permettra de Lui représenter en cet endroit qu'il serait nécessaire que nous fussions un peu mieux instruits que nous ne le sommes de tout ce qui a quelque rapport avec la négociation dont V. M. nous a fait l'honneur de nous charger. Nous ne savons rien de ce qui se passe en Hollande, en Suède et en Danemark.

194. CHOOSING A PLACE FOR THE QUARANTINE.—*Montausier to Lionne, Nov. 16, 1665.*—[There are the St. Marcou islets]; il est vrai qu'il n'y a point de logement, si ce n'est une petite maisonnette où un cordelier se retire l'été comme un ermite. Ainsi ces Messieurs y seraient très mal.

195. THE QUARANTINE.—*Courtin to Lionne, Nov. 25, 1665.*—On dit que dans les pays chauds [la quarantaine] n'est jamais de plus de dix-sept jours pour les personnes. Ainsi, j'espère que si nous abordons heureusement et que nous soyons tous en bonne santé, le Roi nous fera la grâce de nous laisser glisser avec chacun un valet de chambre du côté de Paris. . . . Nous sommes fort embarrassés de nos personnes, et je dirais volontiers comme Don Bertrand : pour deux cents coups de fouet j'en voudrais être quitte et être à la maison.

196. PARTING GIFTS FROM CHARLES.—*Courtin to Lionne, Dec. 13, 1665.*—Mercredi vers les onze heures du soir, comme j'allais me mettre au lit, le Maître des cérémonies vint m'apporter un diamant accommodé pour servir de poinçon, de la part du Roi d'Angleterre. Je lui demandai s'il avait été chez Messieurs de Verneuil et de Cominges. Il me dit qu'il leur venait de porter, au premier une boîte de portrait et à l'autre une bague et des pendants d'oreille, qu'ils avaient acceptés.

197. HOLLES' STREET DIFFICULTIES.—*Holles to Louis, Dec. 1665.*—[Holles goes to the Louvre, following the coach of Madame. He is met by the coach of Madame de Carignan, which coach] s'arrête et attend que celui de Madame fût passé ; puis ses laquais se jettent sur mes chevaux sans rien dire, les arrêtent à coups de bâton et font passer leur carrosse devant le mien. Après cela se mêlent avec mes laquais une douzaine dit-on de ceux-là avec de gros bâtons, préparés ce semble pour une telle affaire ; les miens n'étaient que cinq ou six et n'avaient rien en leurs mains que quelque petite baguette. . . .

Ensuite ils [the Carignan valets] se mirent à braver et à dire qu'il y avait douze carrosses en France qui avaient droit de marcher devant celui de l'Ambassadeur et que le leur en était un.

198. THE JOURNEY. — UNDERGOING THE QUARANTINE.—*The*

Three to Louis, Dec. 25, 1665.—Ce que nous appréhendous à cette heure c'est l'extrême froid qu'il fait depuis deux jours, dont nous sentons déjà la rigueur, étant logés dans une grande maison qui n'a pas encore été habitée et dont les dedans ne sont pas achevés. Nous ne laisserons pas néanmoins de nous tenir dans les bornes de notre quarantaine et, dès aujourd'hui, nous avons fait dire la messe dans le lieu où nous sommes logés sans permettre à pas un de nos gens d'aller à l'église du village, afin qu'on ne nous puisse rien imputer. Après cela nous attendrons en patience et avec toute sorte de soumission les ordres de S. M. dans l'espérance que le vent et le froid nous ayant bien purifiés nous pourrons obtenir la liberté d'être délivrés de l'incommodité que nous souffrons.

Un armateur anglais, nonobstant les passeports du Roi de la Grande Bretagne a pris le maître d'un vaisseau français qui portait les chiens de moi, duc de Verneuil, et un de mes suisses. Ce vaisseau était sorti un jour plus tôt que nous du port de Douvres, dont nous ne sortîmes qu'à la troisième tentative, dans la première desquelles le vaisseau dans lequel nous étions faillit à périr, ayant heurté contre le môle et brisé tout son château de poupe.

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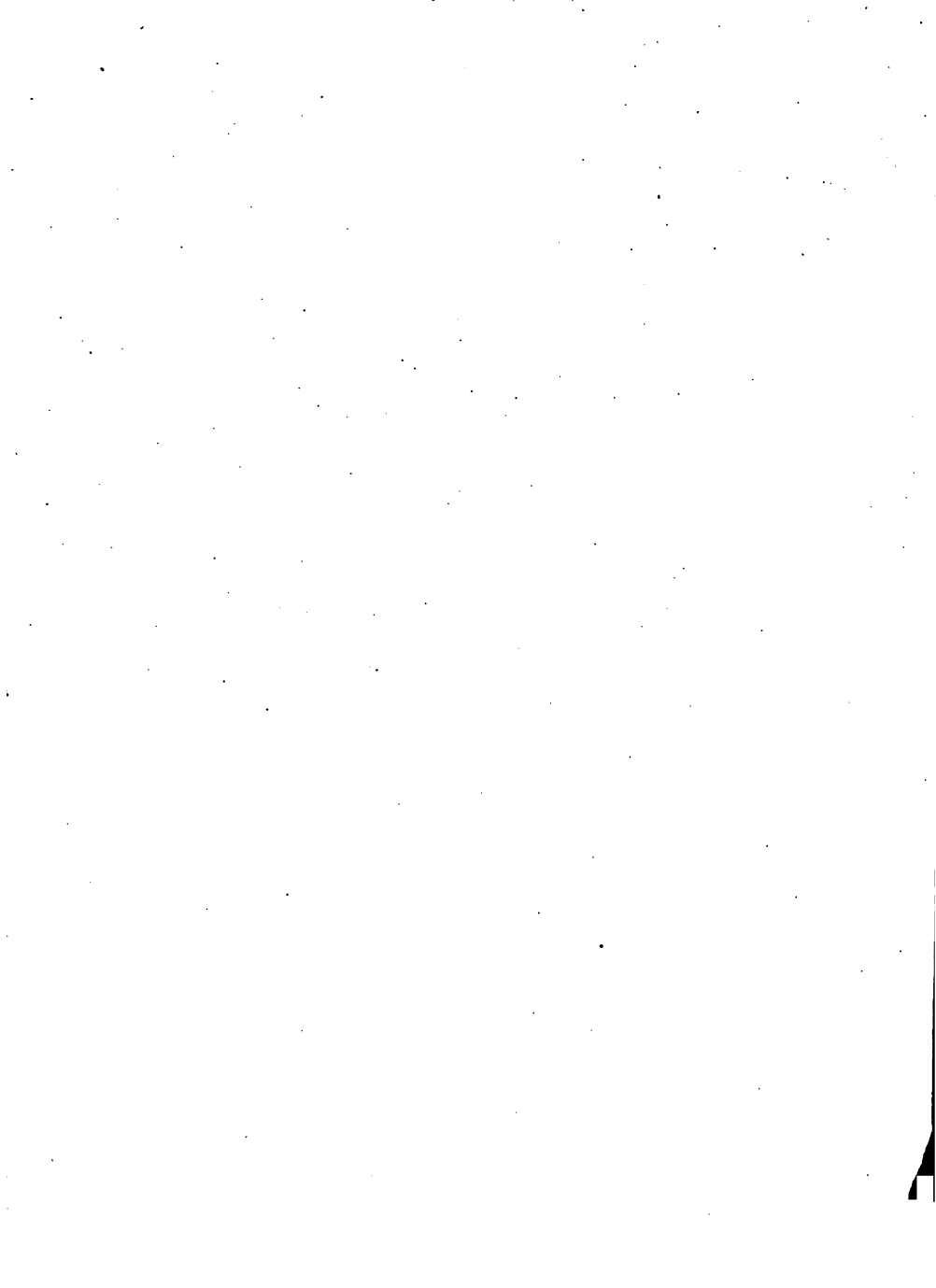
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